

HALES, KELLY KRISTINA, Ed.D. The Effects of Professional Practice of a Systematic Approach to the Professional Development of ESL Teachers in the Area of Writing. (2013)

Directed by Dr. Carl Lashley. 202 pp.

The exponential increase of English Language Learners (ELL) in the United States has resulted in the implementation of effective instructional programs addressing language acquisition and academic content in local school systems. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of professional development on five English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' lesson design and delivery as they converted the knowledge and skills gained in their professional development specific to the area of Writing.

A phenomenological case study was used to gain insight into teachers' perspectives of their experiences as participants in ESL professional development and how the knowledge and skills acquired during the professional development translated to the lesson design and delivery impacting student outcomes. Data were gathered during individual interviews and group professional development sessions and aggregated student data. Analysis of the data resulted in the multiple conclusions. When teachers used appropriate and a wide variety of instructional strategies that were based in the research-proven framework, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), students typically experienced positive growth in Writing. Writing cannot be taught in isolation because it is a component of Literacy. Therefore, through systemic approaches to Writing and writing in each content area, students gain the skills and knowledge to write as a way to communicate their content understanding. Teachers' instruction improved based on the professional development in which teachers participated addressing their

individual areas of development. This systematic approach to differentiated professional development influenced the ESL teachers' lesson delivery and ultimately student outcomes.

THE EFFECTS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE OF A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH
TO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF ESL TEACHERS
IN THE AREA OF WRITING

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
2013

Approved by

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To Mama and Tata & Grandma and Grandpa

Mama and Tata, with your four children, and your parents, Grandma and Grandpa, immigrated to the United States in pursuit of the American Dream. In turn, you allowed me to live the Dream. Thank you for instilling the value of education, hard work, family, and belief in God in Mom and Dad for they have passed these gifts to me.

APPROVAL PAGE

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.
—William Arthur Ward

I believe my doctoral journey is probably similar to many others' experiences who were trying to find an acceptable balance among work, family, friends, and school. Along this journey I received many gifts from people who are important to me. I love giving gifts to people more than receiving them; in fact the occasion to give does not matter. The gifts I give today are expressions of gratitude that come from my heart; I am forever grateful for you.

Thank you to –

- My mentors who encouraged me to begin this journey and reminded me of why they believed in me especially when I was doubtful.
- My colleagues and classmates who provided support and inspiration along the journey.
- My committee, especially Dr. Lashley, who was the cheerleader and shoulder of support when I needed reassurances.
- My ESL colleagues who welcomed me into their “family” and continue to teach me about their cultures, passion, and teaching practices. You truly have hearts of gold.

- To my friends, who are more like family (Brownie, Miguel, and family; my Godchildren; my Angel in heaven, and my sisters in Christ) for the constant prayers, reminders that work and school are not everything in life, and constant faith in me.
- To my sister, Stephanie, who is a blessing from God. I have learned from you more than you will even know.
- To my parents who provided me with the greatest gift . . . Love. I would not be the person I am today without it. Words will never capture how grateful I am that God created our family.
- My Lord and Savior.

“I have the strength for everything through him who empowers me.”

Philippians 4:13

“For human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible.”

Matthew 19:26

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the 2007 U.S. Census, the number of people speaking a language other than English in the home doubled between 1980 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Across the nation, the number of English Language Learners (ELL) has increased. An English Language Learner is a student who is acquiring English for his/her education. Specifically, an English Language Learner is (a) 3 to 21 years of age, (b) enrolled in an elementary or secondary school, (c) a student born outside of the United States or whose native language is not English, and (d) experiencing difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding English which makes meeting state assessment standards, achievement in the classroom, and full participation in society challenging (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002). In North Carolina the ELL and non-ELL enrollment experienced growth. In 2010, the overall K-12 enrollment in North Carolina was 116.3% of enrollment in 2000 (FAIR, 2013). In 2010, the ELL public school enrollment was 287.9% of the enrollment from 2000 (FAIR, 2013). Although both enrollments increased in North Carolina; the ELL population had a greater increase. Additionally, in North Carolina, from 1993 to 2002, there was a 12.5% increase in ELL and this growth is 494% higher than the previous decade (Federation for American Immigration Reform [FAIR], 2011).

As a school system, Excellence County Schools in North Carolina served slightly more than 74,000 students during the 2012-13 school year, and the annual June ELL headcounts reflected an 820% rise of ELL from 1995 to 2010 with consistent annual increases. Even though ELL comprise the fastest-growing student population in the United States, they are also one of the lowest performing groups of students (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Garcia & Cuéllar, 2006, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NC DPI], 2010, 2011, 2012).

Purpose of Study/Problem Statement

When any student enrolls in a North Carolina public school, a Home Language Survey is administered. If a primary home language other than English is indicated, then the student must be assessed with the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Placement Test (W-APT). Annually, students are assessed using the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS). Referred to as the ACCESS for ELL, the assessment assesses the English language proficiency of students in four domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Students remain identified as limited English proficient (LEP) (a term used in federal legislation and used throughout the study in reference to federal requirements) until they meet exit criteria determined by each state.

Many LEP students are not exiting from English as a Second Language (ESL) services because they are not meeting the Writing requirements of the ACCESS. Writing is typically one of the last domains ELL develop, taking up to ten years (Echevarria,

Short, & Powers, 2006). ESL teachers affect students' progress in the process of language acquisition, and Writing is one domain in which student growth is determined (WIDA, 2007). Until the past couple of years, Excellence County Schools was experiencing low scores in the Writing domain, not unlike other school districts. Within the past two years, growth among Writing scores has increased. The purpose of this study was to highlight how professional development for ESL teachers translated into practice for identified, accomplished elementary, middle, and high school teachers and impacted ELL Writing skills. Teachers participate in many types of professional development throughout their careers. Knowledge and skills are acquired through engagement in professional development opportunities that are offered by various departments in school systems, individual schools, and courses as part of certification and graduate programs. Each of these experiences influences teachers' practice. This study explored ESL teachers' experiences with professional development opportunities focused on Writing and how the professional development had some bearing on the teachers' lesson design and delivery.

To help support and facilitate the language acquisition progress and increase content understanding, one must acknowledge that the changing demographics of the United States are reflected in the composition of our public school classrooms. With the demographic shifts, teachers must meet students' needs so that students are provided the best educational settings and experiences for positive student outcomes both in academics and language acquisition. After providing explanations of terms that are used throughout the study in the next section, I will continue by describing the challenges and needs of

ELL and ESL teachers and provide a historical view of educating English Language Learners through a legal and legislative lens.

Classification of Students, Teachers, and Program

Several terms in legislation and literature are used to describe non-native English speaking students, teachers who work with students, and instructional programs designed to address the needs of the students and teachers. In an effort to clarify the various terms used in the study, I provided explanations for terms used for students, teachers, and a program.

Students

Many terms are used within education to describe students whose primary language is not English. In No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the term “limited English proficient” (LEP) is used to describe a subgroup of students who are in the process of acquiring English for their education. In recent literature, these same students were referred to as English as a Second Language (ESL) students, bilingual students, language minority, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD), English Language Learners (ELL), or English Learners (EL). This list is not exhaustive; there were numerous terms for the same group of students. For the purpose of this study, I use only two terms: English Language Learner(s) (ELL) and limited English proficient (LEP) in reference to students. I believe that using the term LEP focuses on a perceived deficiency. Therefore, I use the term LEP only in reference to the federal and state legislation and policies. All other times, I will refer to the identified students as English Language Learners (ELL) because

it more clearly represents students who speak a language other than English as their primary language and are part of the public school system learning English.

Teachers and Programs

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a term used to describe an instructional program designed to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) (NC DPI, 2011). Teachers who implement the ESL program to support ELL are referred to as ESL teachers. Therefore, ESL is used to refer to an instructional program or teachers but not students.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs: Student and Teacher Needs

Educators can classify English Language Learners (ELL) in different categories based on students' previous academic experiences (Freeman and Freeman, 2004, 2007). ELL with strong academic preparation and who are literate in their native languages need different assistance as compared to ELL who are not literate in their native languages and had interruptions in their education. Students who are literate in their native languages need explicit help with English language development to support their abilities to transfer their prior educational knowledge to their specific content area courses in English (Echevarria et al., 2006). Immigrant students with limited formal education due to poverty, war, or isolation in their home countries also experience gaps in education. Usually, such students are not literate in their native languages and because of limited educational experiences, have difficulty with the American educational culture of changing teachers, classes, and testing (Echevarria et al., 2006). No matter their past educational experiences, ELL need literacy skills, English language development, and

content knowledge (Boyson & Short, 2003). ELL rarely have the same proficiency levels in English as native English speaking students who enter school with some level of oral proficiency and knowledge of the alphabet (Echevarria et al., 2006). When students lack oral and written English language skills, they have difficulty learning and demonstrating their knowledge of content in areas such as mathematical reasoning, science skills, and social studies concepts, resulting in immediate disadvantages for ELL in school (Slavin & Cheung, 2003).

Conversational and academic English differ (Echevarria et al., 2006). Most ELL demonstrate growth in gaining conversational or social language skills. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are necessary language functions for carrying on a conversation outside of the classroom and include all of the basic survival interactions and require at least two years to grasp (Cummins, 1979, 1981). However, learning academic English requires acquiring abilities needed to succeed scholastically, such as reading textbooks, writing research papers, and participating in classroom discussions. Once students are able to do so, they have reached Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP; Crandall, 1987, Cummins, 1991). This process takes five to nine years of instruction to meet the same average level of native English speaking students (Collier, 1995; Thomas & Collier, 2002). This time span is challenging for educators, specifically for secondary teachers, as content standards increase in difficulty, high school students face graduation requirements, and high school exit examinations (Echevarria et al., 2006). Systematic language development is imperative for ELL to develop the literacy skills needed for successful experiences in mainstream classes,

meeting content objectives, and for proficient scores on standardized assessments (Echevarria et al., 2006).

Both the judicial and legislative branches of the United States have made rulings or created policies and laws that guide the practice of school districts as ESL programs are implemented appropriately to address the needs of ELL so that they are successful in acquiring English and gaining content knowledge.

Historical View of Educating LEP Students: Legislative and Judicial

Before 1968, there were no federal categorical programs or funds allocated to meet the educational needs of non-English speaking students (Petrzela, 2010). This changed drastically in 1968 when the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) or Title VII to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), was enacted as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. BEA was the catalyst for a federal commitment to educating non-English speakers and providing support for local and state efforts (Petrzela, 2010). The Title VII amendment to ESEA brought a shift in thinking from the idea that students should be provided equal educational opportunities to the notion "that educational policy should work to equalize academic outcomes, even if such equity demanded providing different learning environments" (Petrzela, 2010, p. 408). Title VII provided funding so school districts would create elementary and secondary programs to meet the specialized educational needs of LEP students, as they were called at the time (Bilingual Education Act, 1968, sec. 702). While this single bill was limited to Spanish speaking students, it initiated the introduction of 37 subsequent bills that merged into Title VII of the ESEA and was the first piece of federal legislation that recognized that English Language

Learners have specific, educational needs and bilingual programs should be federally funded (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988).

During the 1960s and 1970s, much of the federal categorical legislation assisted school districts in addressing national priorities such as equity goals (Thomas, Cambron-McCabe, & McCarthy, 2009). Financial support for ELL was maintained while allocations and regulations of other categorical programs decreased as they were consolidated during the 1980s (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988; Thomas et al., 2009).

Guiding Federal Law and Policies

Federal law and policy continued guiding the practice of instruction for English Language Learners. First, the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that “[n]o State shall . . . deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (U.S. Const., amend. XIV). Currently there is much discussion around immigration; however, the U.S. Constitution provides all children with the equal opportunity to participate in the U.S. public school program (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974; *Plyler v. Doe*, 1982).

Secondly, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 offers a legal framework to assist agencies receiving federal funds to develop appropriate and reasonable assistance addressing the needs of LEP persons. The Act stated that “[n]o person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin . . . be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (Civil Rights Act, 1964, Title VI, Sec. 601). Although local and state funds comprised most of the funding strategies to assist LEP individuals, some

federal funding is used and therefore, any discrimination against linguistic minorities is a violation of Title VI as national origin discrimination (Thomas et al., 2009). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act addressed actions that are both intentional and neutral in nature but may have a discriminatory effect. According to “Guidance to Federal Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI, Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons,” recipients of federal funding must take reasonable steps to develop and implement policies and procedures providing LEP individuals with access to appropriate services (The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.). The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (n.d.) outlined four factors that have to be balanced to ensure assistance is offered:

(1) The number and proportion of eligible LEP constituents; (2) the frequency of LEP individuals’ contact with the program; (3) the nature and importance of the assistance program; and (4) the resources available, including costs. (“III. Policy Guidance: 2. Basic Requirement,” para. 3)

Finally, the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA) of 1974 protects students so that all educational institutions take appropriate action to eliminate barriers that prohibit students’ participation in instructional programs. School systems were required to develop programs for LEP students and take appropriate action. The EEOA mandated that:

[n]o state shall deny equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin by . . . the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional program. (EEOA, 1974)

The U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare Memorandum of May 25, 1970, stated that:

Where inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students. (Pottinger, 1970, para. 4)

This memo affirmed the Civil Rights Act (1964) and addressed three specific concerns:

(a) unequal access to participation in school programs because of language; (b) segregation by tracking, ability grouping and assignment to special education programs; and (c) exclusion of parents from school information. The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) implements, reviews, and enforces these compliance procedures.

Case Law

Several court cases provided precedents for the current instructional practices and services for ELL. First, in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), not all of the 2800 Chinese students identified as non-English speakers received supplemental English instruction although the school system was integrated. The unserved students filed a class action suit claiming that the school district denied them equal educational opportunities. The case proceeded to the Supreme Court, and the Court ruled (9–0) that the students’ 14th Amendment rights were not violated because there was an appropriate program offered for ELL. However, under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Court found that discrimination did occur based on national origin.

The Court found that the state's standards did not meet the equality of treatment requirement; school systems must offer more than equal facilities, books, teachers, and curriculum (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). Justice Douglas stated "Basic English skills are at the very core of what the public schools teach. . . . We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experience totally incomprehensible and in no way meaningful" (as cited in *Lau v. Nichols*, 1974, p. 414). As a recipient of the federal funding, the school district was obligated to meet requirements assuring that all students, irrespective of their language deficiencies, were provided the opportunities for education. The Court's opinion referenced the Department of Health, Education and Welfare Memorandum of May 25, 1970, affirming that the Civil Rights Act (1964) does apply to language-minority children. The Office of Civil Rights instructed schools to discontinue practices that resulted in:

1. Unequal access to participation in school programs because of language.
2. Segregation by tracking, ability grouping and assignment to special education programs.
3. Exclusion of parents from school information.

Lau v. Nichols is a landmark case for language rights and equal treatment for ELL and guaranteed children an opportunity to a "meaningful education" regardless of their language background. The Court's decision made it clear that public schools had to ensure that ELL had access to the same curriculum as English speaking peers and the basic learning of English. The Court's decision made it a right for non-English speakers to receive additional supports and services.

In the same year as *Lau v. Nichols*, a group of families filed a suit claiming that students with Spanish surnames were deprived of their rights to equal protection by the 14th Amendment and rights under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In *Serna v. Portales* (1974), students and families claimed (a) the specific language needs of Mexican-American student were not met; (b) the school failed to employ Mexican-American teachers, superintendents, and support personnel; and (c) the design of the instructional curriculum failed to include the cultural and historical Mexican and Spanish contributions. Students from homes where Spanish was spoken and where they were enveloped in their native culture within their communities had low proficiency levels in English. The students continuously scored lower than their white classmates and had higher percentages of high school dropout.

The Court found that students with Spanish last names did not demonstrate the same levels of achievement as white students and therefore ordered the school system to address the educational needs of national origin minority students by creating and implementing a bilingual and bicultural curriculum. In addition to creating an appropriate curriculum, the school district was to review and modify the purpose of assessments and procedures and focus on recruiting and hiring bilingual school personnel including teachers.

Serna v. Portales confirmed that public schools must meet the educational needs of ELL by reviewing and modifying educational programs. The Court found that the educational program offered by the school system was inadequate and required the school

system change its educational program by enlarging it and including bilingual programs at schools where needed to meet students' needs.

In *Cintron v. Brentwood* (1978), around 3,700 mostly Puerto Rican students filed suit against the school district claiming that the *Lau* Guidelines were not followed because the school district planned to modify the bilingual program to keep the Spanish speaking students in classes together. The Court found that not only was the modified educational program inappropriate, but the original program violated the *Lau* Guidelines. The Spanish speaking students were unnecessarily segregated from their English speaking peers.

In the same court just ten months later, another case was brought to Court. In *Rjos v. Reed* (1978) students claimed the transitional bilingual program did not meet students' educational needs; therefore, the district failed to support the bilingual program in multiple ways. The Court found for the students because the district's bilingual program lacked personnel with Spanish language ability and knowledge of bilingual program methodology and evaluation; instructional and educational materials in Spanish; and procedures to identify and place students in the instructional program. The Federal District Court wrote "while the district's goal of teaching Hispanic children the English language is certainly proper, it cannot be allowed to compromise a student's right to meaningful education before proficiency in English is obtained" (*Rjos v. Reed*, 1978).

Both *Cintron v. Brentwood* and *Rjos v. Reed* outlined the rights of ELL for a meaningful education. The educational program must allow students who have gained English proficiency to participate in regular English instruction. Although teaching ELL

English is necessary, students' right to meaningful instruction cannot be compromised before proficiency is reached.

Marler (2009) stated that *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) is the second most important court case after *Lau v. Nichols*. A suit was filed against the school district by the father of two students claiming that the remediation programs violated the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 because his children were discriminated against because of their ethnicity. Also, students were taught in segregated classrooms in which ethnicity and race were used for placement. Finally, he claimed that the bilingual educational program was insufficient, and the program did not assist his children in overcoming language barriers that were preventing them from participating in the equal educational setting. The Court of Appeals reversed the initial decision by the District Court and found for the plaintiffs. The *Castañeda* Test was an outcome of the case. The test is used to determine if the educational program meets EEOA regulations, and it is important to determine compliance with the EEOA. The *Castañeda* Test is a three part test with the following criteria:

1. *Theory*: The school must pursue a program based on an educational theory recognized as sound or, at least, as a legitimate experimental strategy by experts in the field;
2. *Practice*: The school must actually implement the program with instructional practices, resources and personnel necessary to transfer theory to reality;
3. *Results*: The school must not persist in a program that fails to produce results.

(Intercultural Development Research Association, 2013)

The *Castañeda* Test is still in use to ensure compliance with EEOA so that students receive an appropriate education.

In the early 1980s, the Texas state legislature approved a law that allowed the state to withhold funds from specific school districts that enrolled undocumented children. Additionally, the law allowed school districts to deny enrollment in public schools if the students were in the U.S. illegally. Based on this legislation, a class action suit was filed on behalf of school-aged Mexican children claiming the new law violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 vote that the 14th Amendment rights of the children to Equal Protection were violated because undocumented immigrant children were denied free public education. The Court stated that it is not the public school systems' purpose to enforce immigration laws or to determine a student's immigration status. Additionally, states and school systems cannot use the argument that undocumented persons create a burden on the educational system to justify excluding them from or denying them educational service. The Court concluded that the Texas law created disadvantages for undocumented children and denied them a right to an education.

Justice Burger filed a dissenting opinion and Justices White, Rehnquist, and O'Connor joined. The Justices acknowledged the need for education. They stated:

Were it our business to set the Nation's social policy, I would agree without hesitation that it is senseless for an enlightened society to deprive any children—including illegal aliens—of an elementary education. I fully agree that it would be folly—and wrong—to tolerate creation of a segment of society made up of illiterate persons, many having a limited or no command of our language.

However, the Constitution does not constitute us as “Platonic Guardians,” nor does it vest in this Court the authority to strike down laws because they do not meet our standards of desirable social policy, “wisdom,” or “common sense.” . . . We trespass on the assigned function of the political branches under our structure of limited and separated powers when we assume a policymaking role as the Court does today.

The Court makes no attempt to disguise that it is acting to make up for Congress’ lack of “effective leadership” in dealing with the serious national problems caused by the influx of uncountable millions of illegal aliens across our borders. (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982)

The Justices were clearly frustrated that they heard this case and the legislative branch of the U.S. government was not fulfilling its responsibilities with immigration laws. The importance of *Plyler v. Doe* is that states could no longer deny public education to undocumented children, and the Court’s opinion provided a significant statement regarding the importance of education to American society.

The petitioners in *Keyes v. School District #1* (1983) claimed that for almost ten years, the Denver school system had an unconstitutional policy that discriminated against students based on race in certain parts of the school district. Although the entire district was not segregated, it was believed that rights were violated. The Court ruled that the school district failed to meet the second element of the *Castañeda* Test because an adequate plan for language minorities was not implemented.

The U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the lower Court’s ruling in a 7-1 decision that the second part of the *Castañeda* Test was not met, and the school district failed to have an adequate plan implemented for language minorities. Additionally, the Court stated:

the part of a school system is determined to be segregated, a “prima facie case of unlawful [systematic] segregative design” becomes apparent. Therefore, the

school district has the burden of proving that it operated without “segregative intent” throughout the system. This case identified segregation in northern schools. (*Keyes v. School District #1*, 1983)

Justice Rehnquist was the only Justice to dissent and in his opinion he stated that there are district-wide consequences with school districts creating attendance zones that separate races or enacting ordinances that have the same outcome. In previous years, the Supreme Court ruled in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) that busing was allowed to desegregate Southern cities. Two years after the *Keyes v. School District #1* decision and two decades after *Brown v. Board of Education*, desegregation extended to the North (*Keyes v. School District #1*, 1983).

Case law related to National Origin Equity and Desegregation guides the educational practices today for English Language Learners.

- *Lau v. Nichols* (1974)
 - Established that equality of educational services to ELL was beyond offering the same materials and teachers to students whose first language is not English.
 - Affirmed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 position with the implementation in schools so that students had the basic English skills that are at the core of public education, can comprehend the information in classes, and find meaning in the information.
- *Plyler v. Doe* (1982)
 - Ruled that undocumented children cannot be denied a free public education under the 14th Amendment.

- Established that school systems have the purpose to educate and not to enforce immigration policies.
- Refuted the argument that undocumented students burden the school district therefore students cannot be excluded from or denied educational services.
- Prohibited school systems from making inquiries about documentation status, requiring social security numbers, and treating students differently based on documentation status.
- *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981)
 - Created a legal standard by which public schools were required to design instructional programs grounded in educational theories, provide appropriate resources during implementation of the program, and modify instruction based on measures of effectiveness.

These Court decisions are used by local, state, and federal policymakers as the educational services for ELL are developed. They offer the guiding principles that all students are afforded the same educational opportunities and meaningful education as required by Title VI.

Federal Educational Policy

Most recently the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2002 required states (a) to improve the student performance on state tests in the subjects of Reading, Math, and Science in grades 3-8 in public schools and (b) to categorize assessment data by poverty, ethnicity, race,

disability, and limited English proficiency (Thomas et al., 2009). Linguistic minorities are an identifiable subgroup of students and some school systems have denied students within the subgroup adequate education by neglecting to provide appropriate instruction for overcoming the language barriers. Students participate in state assessments to determine the progress of all students; NCLB stated that LEP students must be tested in:

a valid and reliable manner . . . including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency. (NCLB, 20 U.S.C.A. § 6311 (b)(3)(C)(ix)(III), 2002)

Requirements in NCLB have created controversy regarding annual yearly progress (AYP) for students with special needs (Thomas et al., 2009). Without regard to students' needs, NCLB requires students to meet state proficiency levels, and this requirement has caused some difficulties for some schools and districts that have LEP subgroups (NCLB, 2002; NC DPI, 2011).

Title III of NCLB was established to ensure that LEP students within the subgroup, including immigrant children and youth, gain English proficiency while meeting the same academic standards as their peers (United States Education Department [USED], n.d.). According to the U.S. Department of Education Guidance (USED, n.d.), local school districts were tasked with implementing programs that are research-based for the following purposes:

- Developing and implementing new language instruction educational programs and academic content instructional programs for limited English proficient students in early childhood, elementary and secondary programs.
- Expanding or enhancing existing language instruction educational programs and academic content instruction programs.
- Implementing school-wide programs within individual schools to restructure, reform, and upgrade all programs, activities and operations related to language instruction educational programs and academic content instruction for limited English proficient students.
- Implementing in a local educational agency system-wide programs designed to restructure, reform, and upgrade all programs, activities, and operations related to the education of limited English proficient students.

Additionally, great emphasis was placed on professional development. Local school districts were required to provide high quality professional development to ESL and content area teachers, administrators, and community based personnel so that (a) instruction for LEP students is improved resulting in higher assessment data; (b) teachers gain a greater understanding of curricula, assessments measurements, and instructional strategies specific to LEP students; and (c) teachers increase content knowledge and teaching skills (USED, n.d.).

Lastly, parent notification was included in NCLB and components of notification were outlined. First, parent notification included sharing information about how parents can be active participants in their children's educational experiences as they learn English

and content. Also, within 30 days of the start of school, the school system must notify parents about their student's LEP identification and the language instruction program for identified students. Additionally, students' levels of English proficiency and academic proficiency are provided to parents with explanation of the instructional methods that will be used to assist students in meeting educational goals. Finally, parents are informed of their rights under the Title III program.

Based on case law and federal policy, each child, no matter their native language, nation of origin, immigration status or last name, has the right to a meaningful education. Therefore school districts must develop educational programs that address not only the language acquisition process, but also the content knowledge. Once a child is determined to be limited English proficient, the school system must implement a process that identifies individual students' English and academic proficiency levels and shares the information with parents. Parents must also be informed of how the school system will work with the students to assist them in meeting educational goals. The expectations of students meeting high academic goals apply to ELL just as it applies to English speaking students. ELL must also gain English proficiency.

In order for students to achieve both sets of goals, the educational program established by the school system must be based on research-effective theory, hire school staff that understand the needs of ELL, and provide professional development to school staff members. The professional development must impact the instruction for ELL resulting in improved assessment data, increase teachers' understanding of assessments and instructional practices specific to ELL, and enhance the teachers' content knowledge

and teaching skills to provide appropriate instruction to ELL. The professional development component of an effective ESL program must be rooted in research-effective theory, content, and form (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Crawford et al., 2008; Desimone, 2009; Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). Therefore, designing comprehensive professional development provides teachers with opportunities that are more likely to positively impact student outcomes and increase teacher capacity.

Rationale and Perspectives of the Researcher

After completing my undergraduate program, my career began at a public health department as a health educator where a large percentage of clients were non-English speakers. After several years at the health department, I transitioned to public education where I have been a middle school teacher and district leader. In my current position, I oversee several federal programs that provide supplemental support to specific subgroups of students. My interest for this study began when I began reviewing data of non-English speakers and their performance on language and content assessments. It was through this exploration and my personal learning process that my intrigue began. I engaged in conversations with those who taught ELL and worked with ESL teachers to that I learned about the Title III/ESL requirements, the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) framework, testing timelines, domains assessed in the language acquisition process and, professional development design and offerings. Our professional conversations initiated some enhancements regarding the professional development offerings for teachers, both in core features and structural components of the program. Based on the data in the study, I believe that I have been able to discover areas to

consider regarding professional development for not only ESL teachers, but for all teachers (content and grade level teachers) who teach ELL. With the additional professional development, I believe that students will be more engaged in lessons and make greater progress with the language acquisition process while also meeting academic goals.

Importance of the Study

In the United States, there has been an exponential increase in the number of English Language Learners (ELL), yet the academic achievement of ELL continues to be behind the achievement of their English speaking peers (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Garcia & Cuéllar, 2006). Specifically in North Carolina, there was a 12.5% increase in ELL from 1993 to 2002, and this growth is 494% higher than the preceding decade (FAIR, 2011). Excellence County Schools served almost 74,000 students during the 2012–13, and annual June headcounts reflected an 820% rise in ELL since June 1995 with consistent annual increases. The decrease in number of students starting in 2011 demonstrated the impact of new immigration policy in North Carolina (see Table 1).

Across the country, school systems design research based programs and assign high quality teachers to teach ELL. Despite the concerted effort to meet the students' educational needs, challenges still remain as demonstrated in state assessments, including those in North Carolina (NC DPI, 2013). Teachers working with ELL reported participating in minimal hours of professional development and/or training to effectively teach ELL (Echevarria et al., 2006). Research suggested that even eight hours of

professional development is below the minimum needed to learn about a new approach to teaching (Borko, 2004; Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 1997). Echevarria et al. (2006) stated:

Not only do teachers need more preparation to work with ELLs, but they also need to know the type of instruction that is most effective for these students, a population whose growing numbers requires that educators take a serious look at their instructional programs. (p. 196)

Table 1

Excellence County Schools Annual ELL Membership (1995–2013)

Date	Number of ELL in District	Percent of District Population
June 1995	710	1.3%
June 1996	1,096	1.8%
June 1997	1,252	2.1%
June 1998	1,567	2.6%
June 1999	1,790	2.9%
June 2000	2,170	3.5%
June 2001	2,476	4.0%
June 2002	2,674	4.2%
June 2003	3,948	5.9%
June 2004	4,616	6.6%
June 2005	5,245	7.2%
June 2006	5,678	8.0%
June 2007	5,887	8.1%
June 2008	6,013	8.3%
June 2009	6,335	8.7%
June 2010	6,538	8.9%
June 2011	5,979	9.0%
June 2012	5,972	8.7%
June 2013	5,980	8.2%

(Excellence County Schools, 1995–2013)

Based on the offerings of the ESL Department, the ESL Department's professional development offerings exceed the minimum of eight hours of professional development as cited by Borko (2004) and Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond (1997) and is also aligned with the features determined to be effective (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Crawford et al., 2008; Desimone, 2009). Researchers described how the form, duration, participation, content, focus, coherence, and active learning of the professional development influenced the outcomes of the professional development, one being student language and academic outcomes. Therefore, using aggregated student data and teachers' perceptions of how they use the information they gain from professional development, I am able to share these teachers' experiences and link these experiences to research. Additionally, in my review of the research, there was little regarding ESL teachers and professional development specific to Writing. It was my hope that this study would contribute to the body of research specific to professional development for ESL teachers in the area of Writing that positively impacts their students' language outcomes.

Research Questions

The Writing domain for English Language Learners is typically the last domain to develop; however over the past couple years, Excellence County Schools experienced increased growth among Writing scores (Echevarria et al., 2006). The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of professional practice when a systematic approach to the professional development of ESL teachers in the area of Writing is utilized. Specifically, the research questions were:

1. What strategies do ESL teachers use to support English Language Learners' (ELL) progress in Writing?
2. How does professional development for ESL teachers affect lesson design in Writing for ELL?
3. What impact does professional development have on ESL teachers' lesson delivery in the area of Writing?
4. What are ESL teachers' perceptions of professional development offerings specific to Writing?

Summary of Chapters

In this chapter, I stated my intention of exploring the impact of ESL professional development on ESL teachers' lesson development and delivery within a feeder pattern of an elementary, middle, and a high school. It is through their experiences, reflections, and narratives that I captured and told their story of what occurred with these teachers as they converted the knowledge and skills gained in their professional development to include strategies within their classrooms since the number of ELL continues to increase and remains one of the lowest performing subgroups of students in the school district.

Chapter II

My thorough review of the literature attempts to provide background knowledge so that as I tell these teachers' stories, the reader has a better understanding of the context of educating ELL. The literature review begins with an explanation of the North Carolina policies that address the educational program for ELL. Following is the exploration of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework, the

theoretical framework, and professional development for SIOP; effective instructional strategies for English Language Learners (ELL) specifically for Writing; effective professional development practices and specific practices for professional development specific to Writing; and finally Writing assessments.

Chapter III

The qualitative research design is presented in Chapter III. A case study was used to gain insight into teachers' perspectives of their experiences as participants in ESL professional development and how the knowledge and skills acquired during the professional development translated to the lesson design and delivery impacting student outcomes. An on-line survey, to gain background information about the research participants, as well as individual interviews and group sessions were conducted to collect data.

Chapter IV

Descriptions of the participants and their schools start this chapter, so the reader learns about them as their collective stories are told. After data analysis, the identified themes were categorized into the following: why teach Writing?; the relationship between Writing and Reading/Literacy; how teachers learned to teach Writing; instructional strategies used to teach Writing and the connection to SIOP; and professional development—the offerings, changes in offerings over time, and the perceptions of the experiences with professional development.

Chapter V

This chapter explores the teachers' reactions to their students' 2012–13 assessment data and as they reflect on what contributed to the students' successes in Writing. I relay their thoughts about the instructional strategies they used, the professional development they attended, and their plans for Writing in 2013–14.

Chapter VI

Finally, I discuss the findings from this study regarding the effects on professional practice of a systematic approach to the professional development of ESL teachers in the area of Writing. I also offer recommendations for the district's professional development plan that can be used by other departments and school systems to address the needs of ELL, ESL teachers, and content and grade level teachers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

An extensive literature review was conducted regarding components of effective English as a Second Language (ESL) instructional programs demonstrating federal compliance with research-effective frameworks for lesson development and delivery; components of effective high quality professional development; and Writing assessments. Since Chapter I outlined the federal requirements for teaching ELL, Chapter II provides information specific to North Carolina legislative requirements that guide Excellence County Schools' ESL program.

North Carolina Statutes and North Carolina State Board of Education Policies

North Carolina State Legislature and the State Board of Education have established statutes and policies that are aligned with federal legislation and requirements in terms of the education of English Language Learners. According to North Carolina General Statute § 115C-366 (a),

All students under the age of 21 years who are domiciled in a school administrative unit who have not been removed from school for cause, or who have not obtained a high school diploma, are entitled to all the privileges and advantages of the public schools to which they are assigned by the local boards of education.

This North Carolina statute supports federal laws and policies in that all children, despite their national origin and their language preferences, are able to participate in North Carolina's public education programs.

To satisfy Title III of NCLB requirements of identification, classification, and placement, the North Carolina State Board of Education adopted the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) language proficiency standards in 2008. The standards capture the English language development progression and provide teachers with resources and support on how to appropriately teach academic language within the context of content area instruction in social and instructional language and the language of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007).

Since the 2008–09 school year, North Carolina has administered the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) as a screener for all new enrollees whose home language is not English. According to North Carolina Policy and Procedural Guidance for the Annual Testing, there are three purposes:

1. Identify students who are LEP.
2. Determine academic English language proficiency levels of new enrollees to determine the most appropriate level of instructional services.
3. Guide the assignment of students to the three tiers used in annual testing (NC DPI, 2012a).

Additionally, North Carolina outlines the English Language Proficiency Levels from Level 1 (Entering) through Level 6 (Reaching) which provides guidelines for participation in state assessments.

Identified LEP students participate in statewide assessments in one of three tiers (a) standard test administration, (b) standard test administration with accommodations, and (c) the state-designated alternate assessments (North Carolina State Board of Education, 2011). LEP students who score below Level 4 in the Reading section of W-APT during the first year in the U.S. are exempted from the state End-of-Grade (EOG) and state Writing tests calculations. Scores are not used for North Carolina growth, performance composite, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) calculations. The scores from the ACCESS are used for the Reading and Writing participation calculations. Students scoring below Level 4 (Expanding) and have been enrolled in school for less than 24 months, are eligible for the state-designated alternate assessment. Students scoring Level 5 (Bridging) or Level 6 (Reaching) on the Reading ACCESS at any time, must participate in the state assessments with no accommodations.

Based on North Carolina State Board of Education policies and procedures and North Carolina General Assembly Statute, North Carolina has aligned with Federal requirements. It is the districts' and administrators' responsibilities to comply to ensure students' rights are honored as LEP students. North Carolina is aligned to federal requirements by implementing a comprehensive ESL program that addresses the components of the *Castañeda* standards. The NC DPI monitors the implementation of the local educational agency's ESL program to ensure that the program is based on

researched-based and research effective theory. NC DPI accepts the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) as an educational framework for implementation at the local level.

Through a reflective process, ACCESS data, state assessment data, local benchmark/interim assessment data, and individual teacher assessment results are continuously reviewed by teachers and district leaders to ensure students' language and content learning is progressing. Additionally, as part of the local practice, families are not asked about their immigration status at the time of registration because it does not impact the educational experiences. Federal law ensures that all students, no matter their national origin, are provided the opportunity to attend public schools. Students are enrolled and assessed for language proficiency, parents are then notified of the assessment results, and services are provided to students.

North Carolina allows local school district's ESL programs to use Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) as their researched-based and research effective theory, as required by the *Castañeda* Test. SIOP provides teachers with a framework for lesson development and delivery that supports English Language Learners in the language acquisition progress and learning academic English.

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Framework

The major researchers of ELL education are Jana Echevarria, Kristen Powers, Deborah Short, and Mary Ellen Vogt, and their work included the development of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework. Since proficiency in academic English includes knowing syntax in addition to functional language use,

educators need to teach from a systematic, research-based approach (Echevarria et al., 2006). SIOP provides educators with a framework for planning and teaching. SIOP is the outcome of a research project where researchers and teachers collaborated to design, implement, analyze, and redesign the components until the greatest results were achieved. SIOP utilized a rubric that allowed researchers to score teachers as part of the research study, and teachers now use the rubric as a lesson planning guide for implementation of the framework (Echevarria et al., 2006). SIOP is both an instructional model and an observation protocol which provides teachers with a framework to design and deliver lessons and also to monitor student progress.

To teach ELL most appropriately, teachers must have an understanding of the language acquisition process. Echevarria et al.'s research (2006) found that there are relationships among professional development, lesson planning, and classroom implementation of best practices resulting in academic achievement of ELL. Sheltered Instruction (SI) is a specially designed academic, instructional approach that incorporates specific techniques for ELL to better acquire language in academic contexts like Math, Science, and Social Studies classes (Genesee, 1999). Teachers modify their teaching approaches so that ELL will understand the subject-specific content while developing English language proficiency (Echevarria et al., 2006). Sheltered Instruction techniques include: using clear enunciation and slower speech; utilizing visuals and demonstrating concepts; scaffolding instruction, and targeting vocabulary development; connecting students to content through their personal experiences; allowing interactions among students; modifying materials; and using supplementary resources (Addison, 1988;

Echevarria, 1995; Echevarria et al., 2006; Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Genesee, 1999; Kauffman, Sheppard, Burkart, Peyton, & Short, 1995; Short, 1991; Vogt, 2000).

However, the aforementioned techniques and methods are not usually used by upper elementary and secondary school teachers who tend to rely on oral instructions, paper and pencil tasks, and textbook readings (Echevarria et al., 2006). Therefore, there is a gap in practice compared to what research has proven effective.

SIOP Features

The SIOP framework contains 30 features grouped into eight components that are essential for ELL to comprehend content: preparation; building background, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery, and review/assessment (Echevarria et al., 2006). According to Echevarria et al. (2006), the components have the following features:

1. Preparation—The examination of the lesson planning process to include both language and content objectives, use of supplementary resources, and planning meaningful activities for demonstration.
2. Building Background—Linking students' background experiences and engaging prior learning to develop students' academic vocabulary.
3. Comprehensible Input—Requiring teachers to modify their speech to be slower and more clear, model academic tasks for students to see what they need to complete, and use multiple techniques to enhance comprehension.

4. Strategies—Focusing on explicit teaching so that students understand how to access and retain information, build on prior information, and engage in higher order thinking skills.
5. Interaction—Grouping students appropriately for language and content development.
6. Practice/Application—Implementing activities that increase language and content learning.
7. Lesson Delivery—Ensuring that lessons meet planned objectives (both language and content).
8. Review/Assessment—Comprising items that teachers should consider during lesson planning and delivery: review key language and content concepts; assess student learning; and provide feedback to students on their output.

Echevarria et al. (2006) noted the strength of the SIOP framework is that it:

allows for natural variation in classroom implementation while it provides teachers with specific lesson features that, when implemented consistently and to a high degree, are likely to lead to improved academic outcomes for ELLs . . . [and] the model . . . provides a rating scale so that lesson observations may be scored. That feature is important for teachers' own professional growth and development. (p. 201)

Effective SIOP implementation incorporates high-quality instructional methods integrated in regular educational classrooms and includes specific strategies proved to further develop English language skills (Echevarria et al., 2006). This is a change in the teaching and learning process and teachers' philosophy since they have to engage all four language domains within the content areas in meaningful ways (Echevarria et al., 2006).

The domains are Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. The integration of the four language domains is not a new concept for ESL teachers. The SIOP framework encourages content teachers to incorporate these four domains into their content lessons. Additionally, SIOP promotes collaboration and the implementation of the co-teaching model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008).

SIOP: Theoretical Framework

The numerous features of the SIOP framework are grounded in multiple theories. Some of the major theories within the framework are described.

SIOP: Comprehensible input. First, the Comprehensible Input component of the SIOP Model used Krashen's (1985) theory of providing understandable instruction. Krashen (1985) offered that second language acquisition consists of five hypotheses: (a) acquisition-learning, (b) monitor, (c) natural order, (d) input, and (e) affective filter.

Acquisition-learning hypothesis. There are two systems of learning: acquired and learned. Within these systems, language acquisition requires interaction with the second language as a subconscious process through communication (Krashen, 1985). The learning system is comprised of formal instruction, and is the conscious process that results in knowledge of the language like grammar and form (Krashen, 1985). Krashen (1985) contended that the learning process is less significant than acquisition. The best way to learn a language is through natural communication and teachers should then create authentic situations in which students engage in communication with others.

Monitor hypothesis. Monitoring is active when students are planning, editing, and correcting language. It is present when ELL have adequate time to review and

process information, focus on correctness, and know the rules for grammar. Krashen (1985) suggested that overuse or underuse of the monitor is based on a person's classification of being an introvert or extrovert with low confidence impacting the overuse of the monitor. The "monitor" can be a barrier for ELL in that it forces the student to slow down, focusing on accuracy rather than fluency. ESL teachers must determine a balance between accuracy and fluency for each student based on his/her language proficiency level.

Natural Order hypothesis. According to the Natural Order hypothesis, ELL learn some grammatical structures before others in the acquisition process. This natural order is independent of intentional teaching. ESL teachers cannot change the order in which students learn. Instead, teaching should occur in an order that is conducive to learning. By starting with concepts that are easier to learn and then progress to harder concepts, scaffolding can be used for ELL to learn the more difficult concepts (Krashen, 1985).

Input hypothesis. The Input hypothesis addresses acquisition, not learning, because ELL progress along the natural order only as they receive information that they can fully understand. This information, or comprehensible input, should be one step above the ELL current language proficiency so that ELL learn to progress with their language development and stages of linguistic competence (Krashen, 1985).

Affective Filter hypothesis. Finally, Affective Filter addresses the variables that impact second language acquisition and include: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety (Krashen, 1985). Krashen (1985) suggested that ELL with low-levels of motivation, self-confidence, positive self-image, and higher levels of anxiety experience more challenges

in learning the language because the affective filter acts as a barrier for language acquisition. It is like a mental block for students as they learn. To limit the effects of the filters, ESL teachers should create positive, print rich classroom environments.

SIOP: Interaction. Scaffolding comes from Vygotsky's (1978) idea of a Zone of Proximal Development in which the student's current understanding is used to build on and increase the levels of learning for students providing support for Comprehensible Input. Social interaction is a foundational piece of cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky (1978) stated:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (p. 57)

Additionally, Cummins's (1979, 1981) framework addressed the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS are the everyday language skills that allow people to successfully interact with others in informal conversations, read simple narratives, and write informal communication (Crandall, 1987; Cummins, 1979, 1981). When a student has the ability to use and understand academic language like reading and understanding an abstract, engaging in classroom content specific discussions, and taking notes, he/she has reached Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP; Crandall, 1987). Students can acquire BICS in about one to two years; however, it may take anywhere

from five to seven or more years to achieve CALP (Cummins, 1991; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Freeman and Freeman's (2004, 2007) theory described the significance of teachers' individual understanding of linguistics and language acquisition. With this understanding, teachers can help ELL feel comfortable in the mainstream classrooms by drawing on the first language to assist with comprehensible input. Such strategies include providing the student with a buddy who speaks the same languages, having a classroom library that has books in the students' native languages, encouraging the student to write in a journal, and also having bilingual tutors. All of these strategies encourage the language development of the students' literacy in their native language which transfers into their second language literacy skills.

Halliday illustrated how students learn language through a tri-functional framework of meaning which includes ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Halliday, 1976, 1978). All three aspects impact how ELL create meaning. Connecting to the world, observing how people interact, and using expressive language assist ELL with the formation of meaning. Interaction between the speaker and the listener and ways that opinions and thoughts are used to influence others demonstrate the interpersonal meaning component of the framework (Halliday 1976, 1978, 1984). Even the tone of the language provides information about the message that is being given and gives cues to the meaning of the words (Halliday 1976, 1978, 1984). The textual meanings encompass how language in situations supports ELL to communicate and understand the message; for

example, words such as second, next, or finally provide order to a sequence of events and increases the meaning of the situation (Halliday 1976, 1978, 1984).

Faltis (1997) highlighted the importance of setting goals and allowing students to develop so that they can interact in social and academic settings by acquiring and using knowledge that the school and community deem important. By interacting with peers, printed materials, and adults, ELL gain language and learn academic concepts. Faltis (1997) contended that comprehensible input is not the only component for ELL to be successful because they also need the comprehensible invite in which teachers provide oral and written language to invite students to be part of the process to build knowledge.

SIOP: Strategies. The cornerstone of SIOP is the use of language objectives to help ELL gain language functions required for successful and meaningful classroom participation. Therefore, in the Strategies component of the SIOP Model, Chamot and O'Malley (1994) explained the importance of providing ELL with language and content objectives to provide the framework for students to become academically successful. Experienced learners have formed a mental process to assist with comprehension, learning, and retention of information; however, many ELL have not yet developed this system. By providing numerous opportunities and using different strategies, students use cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies during classroom experiences, ELL can grasp concepts (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). The use of various strategies by teachers assists ELL in becoming strategic learners possessing the skills needed to support academic growth (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994). Teachers use various strategies

within their lessons to provide targeted support in order for ELL to acquire academic language development skills.

Professional Development for SIOP

Short, Echevarría, and Richards-Tutor (2011) acknowledged that teachers who received SIOP training need at least two years of support to be high implementers. They acknowledged that as more research becomes available, if shorter times of training and support result in continued student achievement, this will impact the professional development offerings to ESL teachers who are implementing SIOP. “Changing teacher practice is a long-term endeavor,” as a result, additional support beyond a series of workshops such as coaching, lesson plan development, and technical assistance is necessary” (Short et al., 2011, p. 329). Research to determine what type of additional assistance is needed will inform school districts regarding future professional development opportunities that will impact student achievement.

Batt (2010) explained that Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) professional development includes coaching teachers to have a full command of the SIOP framework; knowledge of how ELL acquire language and how literacy skills are developed in children and adolescents; understanding of ESL teaching strategies; content area understanding; leadership skills; and experience with coaching and/or mentoring. Costa and Garmston (1994) argued that cognitive coaching is a cyclical process that includes preconference, observation, and post conference. These components are the same as clinical supervision, but the purpose of cognitive coaching is to use individual reflection to increase instructional effectiveness (Garmston & Linder, 1993). Cognitive

coaching develops teacher autonomy so that teachers gain the ability to self-monitor, self-analyze, and self-evaluate (Garmston & Linder, 1993).

Effective Instructional Strategies for ELL Specifically for Writing

All of the instructional strategies reviewed in the literature for this summary are based on theory and when implemented complement the SIOP framework. ELL are not a homogeneous group of students; rather their academic abilities range from emergent readers, writers, and speakers of English to proficient in all domains (Schulz, 2009). To encourage ELL progress in the writing process, teachers must create positive and supportive environments where students are encouraged to use oral language (Schulz, 2009). Since each student has a different starting point, teachers must have realistic expectations because unrealistic expectations support the deficit model (Schulz, 2009).

According to Schulz (2009), there are four different approaches to writing: language experience, shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing. Each of these approaches is interrelated and social collaboration is a key component of the first three approaches and will encourage oral language development (Schulz, 2009). Teachers utilize explicit writing instruction to meet each student's individual needs (Schulz, 2009). Explicit instruction focuses on real-life use so that ELL learn language "in the context of actual language use" not merely teaching through meaningless exercises lacking relevance and purpose (Schulz, 2009, p. 60).

Interactive Writing

Williams and Pilonieta (2012) described interactive writing with Kindergarten and first grade ELL, which is reflective of Vygotsky's (1978) idea of Zone of Proximal

Development where learners progress from assisted learning to independent learning.

Through scaffolding, teachers continue working with students until they acquire necessary skills and knowledge to write independently (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012).

Research suggested that the writing development process for Pre-Kindergarten and lower elementary ELL is similar to English speaking students of the same age; therefore, it is proposed that effective writing instruction for English speaking students may also be effective with ELL (Buckwalter & Lo, 2002; Neufeld & Fitzgerald, 2001; August & Shanahan, 2006).

There are several steps in interactive writing instruction. The first starts with the shared activity. In the shared activity there is most frequently a storybook reading where either the teacher reads the picture book or it is completed through shared reading and there is a concentration on specific vocabulary. ELL benefit from hearing the new vocabulary and syntax, discussing the events in the story through focused dialogue, and scaffolding oral English development (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). Through this process, background information is created and students are likely to be more engaged and motivated (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012).

Next, Williams and Pilonieta (2012) described that teachers ask open ended questions encouraging students' language as they plan their responses to the book they discussed. During this process, it is acceptable for an ELL to use a native language word because it provides an opportunity to introduce a new English word for the student (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). After the student decides on the message, the teacher uses think aloud strategies to model for the students as he/she writes the information on a large

writing tablet (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). Through this explicit modeling, teachers model phonemic segmentation skills, conventions, and specific concepts about written language, and ELL begin to understand the sequential thinking and processing that are needed to develop into proficient writers (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). *Sharing the Pen* is a specific strategy where students make corrections to letters, words, and punctuation while students contribute to the instruction (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). The purpose of *Sharing the Pen* is to focus students on specific concepts and strategies where development is needed (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012). Additionally, teachers are able to informally assess current knowledge and understanding of writing and the written language (Williams & Pilonieta, 2012).

Using Music

Paquette and Rieg (2008) explained how the use of music also supports ELL writing skills since it is anchored in theory: affective, cognitive, and linguistic reason. Songs, chants, and rhymes teach concepts that make the written word more meaningful and conventions of print are learned in context (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Krashen (1985) explained that for optimal learning, a student must have a positive attitude for learning and therefore the student affective filter is weak. When songs are used as part of instruction, the climate of the classroom is likely informal and positive resulting in a weak affective filter and promoting language development (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Songs provide an opportunity for students to develop automaticity as part of the language process and through repetition of verses and rhyme in many children's songs (Paquette &

Rieg, 2008). Elementary ELL encounter informal language, so linguistically using songs will prepare students for genuine language for everyday use (Paquette & Rieg, 2008).

Teachers can use music as part of a writing lesson because students can write new words for old songs or compare and contrast new versions of songs with older versions (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Since teachers use journal writing for students to provide an independent response to a book, using books that are set to songs promotes discussions among students developing oral language (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). Additionally, students, independently or with a partner, can write songs as they read content material to promote learning and allow for the reinforcement of concepts (Paquette & Rieg, 2008).

The language experience approach can be used to model the writing process and enhance a shared musical experience (Paquette & Rieg, 2008). There are four steps to the process of language experience approach: provide an experience, talk about the experience, record the dictation, and read the text (Tompkins, 2009). This process is effective with ELL because the teachers and peers support vocabulary and comprehension skills within the shared learning experiences (Peregoy & Boyle, 2008).

Integrating Writing in Content Areas

Integrating writing in content areas provides ELL with opportunities to increase their fluency so that content is better understood, and students can engage in content writing. The integration of Science and Literacy is supported by each content area's professional communities (Douglas, Klentschy, Worth, & Binder, 2006; Guthrie, Anderson, Alao, & Rinehart, 1999; Hand, Wallace, & Yang, 2004; Holliday, Yore, & Alverman, 1994; Palinscar & Magnusson, 2001). Hands-on, inquiry based strategies

offer learning opportunities for ELL in which they are actively engaged as compared to when traditional textbook activities are used (Lee & Fradd, 1998; Rosebery, Warren, & Conant, 1992). These interactive activities are part of the SIOP framework when students are interacting with groups of students and have opportunities to implement activities increasing language and content learning (Echevarria et al., 2006).

Process-Orientated Writing

Another instructional method for writing is process-orientated writing, often referred to as Writer's Workshop. Its key components provide a comprehensive framework:

- a. minilessons on workshop procedures, writing skills, composition strategies, and craft elements;
- b. sustained time (20-30) minutes for personally meaningful writing nearly every day to help students become comfortable with the writing process and varied writing tasks;
- c. teacher- and student-led conferences about writing plans and written products to help students appropriate habits of mind associated with good writing and to make the most of their writing; and
- d. frequent opportunities for sharing with others, sometimes through formal publishing activities, to enhance the authenticity of writing activities and cultivate a sense of community. (Troia, Shin-ju, Cohen, & Monroe, 2011, p. 156)

Writer's Workshop provides opportunities for teachers to model during the mini-lessons, and then opportunities for students to practice writing during sustained writing time about topics that are meaningful. Writer's Workshop also incorporates feedback in teacher-student conferences to provide reinforcement for positive writing skills for continued development in writing. Lastly, sharing provides opportunities for students to share with

one another and even larger groups through publication which offers the students examples of the purpose of writing and allows them to celebrate writing successes.

Effective Professional Development Practice

Crawford, Schmeister, and Biggs (2008) stated that professional development (PD) which is individualized, focused, and intensive results in positive teacher outcomes. For the past 10 years, many researchers have studied PD and have identified key components (Birman, Desimone, Porter, & Garet, 2000; Crawford et al., 2008; Desimone, 2009; Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). Currently, such work is used as the framework for effective PD and research continues to confirm the key features. There are three core features that establish the framework for PD, and three that occur during the activity (Birman et al., 2000). Form, duration, and participation are the structural components, and the core features are content focus, coherence, and active learning, (Birman et al., 2000; Desimone, 2009). Both core features and structural features work together (Crawford et al., 2008).

The form of the PD impacts the effectiveness of the opportunities. In the traditional form, PD was determined less effective because the time, activities, and content were not adequate to build additional teacher knowledge and to change practices in the classroom (Loucks-Horsley, Hewson, Love, & Stiles, 1998). Reform activities are longer which provide more opportunities for increased content focus, active learning opportunities, and coherence (Birman et al., 2000). PD that is extended over the entire school year, offering opportunities for modeling, coaching observations, and collaboration, is more effective (Birman et al., 2000). Intensive, job-embedded PD

focused on content is more likely to result in improved teacher knowledge, classroom instruction, and ultimately, student achievement (Wayne et al., 2008). Birman et al. (2000) found in their research that longer PD opportunities provided teachers with increased opportunities for active learning, more coherence with other teachers, and greater subject content focus. Professional Development offered collective participation allowing teachers from similar areas (grade level, content or department) to engage in discussions and problem solve with one another as lessons are developed and integrated into their classrooms based on what they learned in PD (Birman et al., 2000).

Focusing PD on specific subjects or content areas increased teachers' understanding (Birman et al., 2000). "Programs whose content focused mainly on teachers' behaviors demonstrated smaller influences on student learning than did programs whose content focused on teachers' knowledge of the subject, on the curriculum, or on how students learn the subject" (Kennedy, 1998, p. 17). Active learning provided teachers opportunities to discuss, plan, and practice the professional development so that there was an increase in knowledge and skills changing classroom practices (Birman et al., 2000). Active learning included "opportunities to observe and be observed teaching; to plan classroom implementation; . . . to review student work; and to present, lead, and write" (Birman et al., 2000, p. 31).

The final key component of effective professional development is coherence. Coherence is when policies and experiences are interrelated, and teachers' experiences increased learning with improved classroom practice as an outcome (Birman et al., 2000). Generally speaking, PD that does not connect teaching techniques with content was less

effective (Birman et al., 2000). Most teachers desire specific tools and examples during the PD so that they can return to their classrooms and begin implementing what they learned immediately (Clair, 1995).

Effective Professional Development Specifically for Writing

Based on an initial review of literature, there is not an extensive body of research that discusses professional development in the area of Writing specifically for ESL teachers and building their capacity to increase the writing skills of ELL. There is literature specific to content or grade level teachers who teach ELL since most do not understand the language acquisition process and support is needed in that area.

As previously described, professional development must have a content focus for it to be translated to the classroom and used to improve instruction. Specifically with Reading and Writing, PD is a means to increasing teachers' knowledge and skills to in turn enhance instruction (Rupley, 2011). About 25 years ago, there was a paradigm shift in writing instruction; the traditional approach of teacher lead instruction on discrete skills and short writing assignments was replaced (Troia et al., 2011). The process-oriented instruction like Writer's Workshop was embraced (Troia et al., 2011). Researchers suggested that writing process instruction produces higher quality writing compared to the traditional methods (Graham & Perin, 2007; Honeycutt & Pritchard, 2005; Monteith, 1991; Scannella, 1982; Varble, 1990).

Wickstrom et al. (2010) discussed a National Writing Project (NWP) implemented at the local level. They described the PD offered in the form of summer institutes for writing. The first year institute contained PD activities that supported

teachers increased knowledge. First, teachers participated in an investigation of current research about writing instruction for ELL. Secondly, teachers planned, implemented, and evaluated writing that was culturally responsive for ELL. Lastly, in the three day institute, teachers shared what was learned with colleagues in the writing network. A central text was used as they investigated how students can be encouraged to write their own personal stories (Wickstrom et al., 2010). Teachers also participated in Saturday sessions throughout the year to deepen their understanding of writing practices (Wickstrom et al., 2010). In the second year, the institute expanded to five days where the principles were refined and the inquiry cycle was clarified and used as a planning tool for instruction (Wickstrom et al., 2010).

This Writing professional development had key components that Birman et al. (2000) outlined as effective professional development components: form, duration, participation, content focus, coherence, and active learning. Wickstrom et al. (2010) found that the writing program they studied had modest positive gains. Additionally, students' Writing scores improved when their teachers participated in all aspects of the professional development (Wickstrom et al., 2010). As for the teachers that attended the summer institute but not the follow-up sessions, students' scores had mixed results (Wickstrom et al., 2010). These results support the need for comprehensive, on-going PD for improved classroom instruction resulting in increased student achievement.

In another evaluation study, researchers reviewed a PD program structured around the Writer's Workshop philosophy. Key components of form, duration, participation, and active learning were incorporated in the PD (Kaminski, Hunt-Barron, Hawkins, &

Williams, 2010). Third through fifth grade teachers participated in PD sessions that used the modeling technique perspective so that teachers could take the skills learned directly back to classrooms. Each session included read-aloud text and opportunities to write and share their writing (Kaminski et al., 2010). Researchers used Desimone's (2009) theory of action for effective professional development to analyze data regarding teachers' increased skills and knowledge, variation in teachers' attitudes and beliefs; enhancement in instruction, and an understanding of a professional community. In this two year study of two different schools, there were significant improvements in students' writing scores in both schools where teachers participated in the workshop style PD (Kaminski et al., 2010). Although teachers' beliefs and attitudes improved after the on-going professional development, researchers noted inconsistencies in student outcomes; therefore, researchers suggested further research specific to teacher implementation of new strategies in classrooms (Kaminski et al., 2010).

Writing Assessments

Teachers should use multiple, authentic writing samples over time to determine students' area of growth and areas that are still in need of support (Schulz, 2009). Through the review of writing, the progression of students' writing was reviewed and informed teachers how to modify instruction to help students meet their content goals and language goals (Schulz, 2009). Student writing samples are assessed using a variety of tools. The NWP's Analytic Writing Continuum includes six criteria: content, structure, stance, sentence fluency, diction, and conventions and holistic and is adapted from the

Six +1 Trait Writing Model (NWP, 2012). In addition to the holistic scores, the additional attributes of writing are assessed (NWP, 2012).

The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Writing rubric assesses ELL writing samples in the areas of linguistic complexity, vocabulary usage, and language control (Gottlieb et al., 2007). Linguistic complexity is how the students obtain the highest level (Reaching) when ELL construct sentences which vary in length in a well-organized writing sample that has cohesion (Gottlieb et al., 2007). Linguistic complexity encompasses “the amount of discourse (oral or written), the types and variety of grammatical structures, the organization and cohesion of ideas and, at the higher levels of language proficiency, the use of text structures in specific genres” (WIDA, 2007). As ELL gain proficiency, then structures become more complex (WIDA, 2007). Vocabulary usage is important for ELL literacy development especially in content knowledge (WIDA, 2007). “[M]astery of academic language is arguably the single most important determinant of academic success; to be successful academically, students need to develop the specialized language of academic discourse that is distinct from conversational language” (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, & Rivera, 2006, p. 7). As students progress through levels of proficiency, their vocabulary use changes from general language to technical language that is used in responding to tasks (WIDA, 2007). When students use correct words in the right places, then students’ scores reflect the highest level (Reaching). Finally, for language control, students have obtained proficiency when their writing samples reflect selections of words to convey meaning and are free of grammatical errors (WIDA, 2007.).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (see Figure 1) for this study included the effective components of professional development according to the work of Birman et al. (2000) and Desimone (2009) and the instructional framework of Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) developed by Echevarria et al. (2006). It is with the structural components and core features of professional development that professional development is designed and implemented using the SIOP framework which teachers use for lesson delivery. The content focus was Writing. The professional development provided participants opportunities to experience the SIOP components within the context of professional development for Writing so that teachers can experience the writing process as students thus increasing teachers' understanding and changing teachers' practices in the classroom to impact student learning. Although SIOP is a framework used by teachers within classrooms, it is through modeling, active learning, and interactions during the professional development that SIOP components are infused into the professional development opportunity. This also contributes to teachers internalizing SIOP and using the framework as part of lesson planning and delivery.

In the next chapter, I will describe the research tradition; research district, schools, and teachers; and data analysis process that was used to gain insight into teachers' perspectives of their experiences as participants in ESL professional development and how the knowledge and skills acquired during the professional development translated to the lesson design and delivery impacting student outcomes.

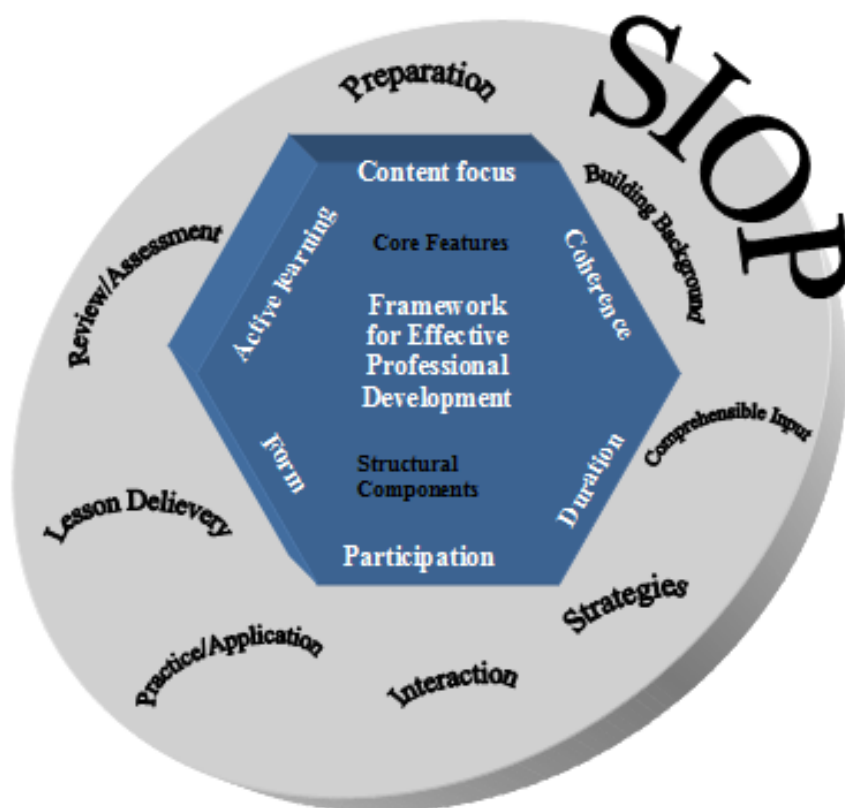


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Since ESL is one of the programs under my umbrella of supervision, the work outlined in the study continued to be work that is part of the position and oversight of the ESL Department. The review of multiple years' data included ACCESS data and ESL teachers' annual mid-year reflections prior to the start of the research project and assisted in the research design. With the Director of ESL and central office ESL lead teachers, it was determined that research regarding the impact of ESL professional development offerings to ESL teachers specific to writing based on ACCESS writing data was an important area on which to focus.

Research Design

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) described qualitative research as focusing on interpreting a phenomenon in a natural setting to understand the meaning of what the research subjects offer. Studying subjects in their natural settings allows researchers to explore the subjects' understanding and learn about their meaning rather than the researchers' interpretations (Mays & Pope, 2000). Qualitative researchers attempt to gain an understanding of unique interactions in a specific situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). I chose a qualitative study so I could collect data about the ESL teachers' experiences, perceptions, reflections, and interpretations of the professional development offered by the ESL Department and how they translated their knowledge and skills to lesson design

and lesson delivery. The purpose of the qualitative study was to gain a deeper understanding of the ESL teachers' experiences rather than to predict what might occur. Using an emergent design, a tradition of qualitative research, a specific process was not predetermined as the study began. Rather, I started with an interest about aspects of professional development that ESL teachers received, the impact on teachers' lesson design and delivery, and the impact on their students' ACCESS Writing scores.

As Suter (2012) stated, qualitative research designs usually "are described *after* types of qualitative data and methods of analysis are described" (p. 343). Data collection and analysis usually occur simultaneously since ongoing findings impact the type of data collected (Merriam, 2009; Suter, 2012). "The type of data collected and the approach to its analysis are more relevant to a researcher's compelling argument and sound conclusion than a category name placed on a general approach to data collection" (Suter, 2012, p. 343). Suter (2012) described that many times "a qualitative research design evolves and is likely not clarified until data collection ends" (p. 343). With that said, I started the study with the idea that I was conducting a case study with the common professional development as the case. As the data were collected and analyzed over time, I thought that the study was more of a phenomenological study. By using a case study design, I explored the impact of professional development, specific to Writing, for ESL teachers on their students' WIDA ACCESS scores. The case was the professional development experiences of the ESL teachers. The case study attempted to provide insight about the phenomena by studying a single case. The study provided insight to the teachers' perceptions of professional development and an understanding of how the

professional development impacted instructional design and implementation and students' progression in language acquisition.

A phenomenology study explored the effects on professional practice of a systematic approach to the professional development of ESL teachers in the area of Writing. The study explored how the content of professional development translated to teacher practice in terms of lesson development, use of instructional strategies, and teacher beliefs about professional development that ultimately assisted ELL progress in Writing from their point of view. The teachers shared their experiences and thoughts through a reflection process both as part of their teaching practice and also as part of this research study.

Hence, this research was a phenomenological case study. Lester (1999) described the phenomenological approach as one that gathers in-depth information that the research represents from the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, the phenomenological approach is centered on the participants' knowledge focusing on personal perspectives (Lester, 1999; Vaughn, Schumm, Jallard, Slusher, & Saumell, 1996). Phenomenological research's purpose is to describe how the teachers describe their experiences (Denscombe, 2004; Husserl 1970). Stake (1995) emphasized that a qualitative phenomenological case study focuses on the uniqueness of cases and the participants' experiences.

A phenomenological study is used to highlight the participants' experiences from their points of view to "challeng[e] structural or normative assumptions. . . . enabling it to be used as the basis for practical theory, allows it to inform, support or challenge policy

and action” (Lester, 1999, p. 2). In order to understand the professional development approach, I studied a case of professional development through the experiences of the teachers who were involved.

To gain teachers’ perspectives for this study, questions were asked that required the teachers to purposely reflect on their practices and experiences in professional development. Larrivee (2000) stated, “Unless teachers develop the practice of critical reflection, they stay trapped in unexamined judgments, interpretations, assumptions, and expectations. Approaching teaching as a reflective practitioner involves fusing personal beliefs and values into a professional identity” (p. 293). A teacher’s experiences in his/her classroom and in professional interactions influences the development of beliefs for teachers. Dewey (1933) contended that when people begin to reflect, then they initiate an ending to their routine thinking and practice and begin to engage in reflective action. Teachers then think through the problem or challenge, exploring possibilities of how to address or correct the problem or challenge. Many times it is through trial and error that a solution is determined.

Expanding on Dewey’s idea, Schon focused on the development of reflection among professionals rather than the exact process of reflection. In the seminal work, Schon (1983) outlined how professionals are conscious of their internalized knowledge and learn from their teaching experiences and other opportunities they have from which to learn. Additionally, he identified two types of reflection: reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. The difference between the two is when the reflection takes place—

either after the event or during the event. Despite when the reflection occurs, it is through reflection that teachers build new understanding for their practice.

Zeichner and Liston (1996) offered five different levels when reflection occurs with teachers. These levels include:

1. Continuous and automatic action—rapid reflection
2. Conscious decision making to change his/her action based on the student's needs—repair reflection
3. Focused thinking, discussing, and writing about an aspect of their teaching—review
4. Systematic and continual thinking overtime by reviewing research or collecting data—research
5. Critically explores how the teacher teaches and educational theories—re-theorizing and reformulating

Through all of these levels of reflection, teachers will encounter many emotions, as Schon (1983) described

The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomenon before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomenon and a change in the situation. (p. 68)

It is important to realize that not all support reflective practice and have found imperfections with Schon's claims. Some state that his work does not have clarity and precision, does not place enough importance on reflection before action, and reflection in

action is unachievable (Finlay, 2008). In light of these arguments that refute or question Schon's ideas, Finlay (2008) stated

Different models are needed, at different levels, for different individuals, disciplines and organisations, to use in different contexts. Professional practice and education are also likely to benefit from the stimulus—and challenge—provided by competing perspectives and multiple models. Models need to be applied selectively, purposefully, flexibly and judiciously. . . . Done well and effectively, reflective practice can be an enormously powerful tool to examine and transform practice. (p. 10)

It was the reflection through which teachers shared their experiences, opinions, and suggestions for change both with their instruction and professional development that this phenomenological case study researched.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of professional practice when a systematic approach to the professional development of ESL teachers in the area of Writing is utilized. Specifically, the research questions are:

1. What strategies do ESL teachers use to support English Language Learners' (ELL) progress in Writing?
2. How does professional development for ESL teachers affect lesson design in Writing for ELL?
3. What impact does professional development have on ESL teachers' lesson delivery in the area of Writing?
4. What are ESL teachers' perceptions of professional development offerings specific to Writing?

Research Setting

School District

Excellence County Schools is a large school district in the southeastern region of the United States and among the fifty largest districts in the United States. During the 2012-13 school year, the district served almost 74,000 students, including Pre-Kindergarten students, in 124 schools which were located in a combination of urban, suburban, and rural settings throughout the county. Of the 124 schools, 68 were elementary, 22 middle, 28 high schools, and 8 alternative schools (offering alternative learning settings that include smaller learning communities, separate special education programs, and site exclusively for students new to the U.S.). Some of the campuses had multiple grade spans such as elementary and middle or middle and high school.

During the 2012-13 school year, almost 58% of the students in the district came from families below the poverty level as indicated by their qualification for free and/or reduced priced lunches; students represented 95 countries and spoke about 120 different languages and dialects. The student ethnic composition for the 2012-13 school year are shown in Table 2.

The district employed almost 10,500 part and full-time staff members. Of the almost 5,000 certified elementary and secondary teachers, 122 were ESL teachers assigned to 102 schools. Most teachers were assigned to a single school for the entire year; however, some ESL teachers were assigned to a couple schools which have lower ESL enrollment as compared to other schools.

Table 2**Excellence County Schools 2012–13 Ethnic Subgroups**

Ethnic Subgroup	Percent of Total Student Enrollment
American Indian	.75%
Asian	.57%
Black	40.76%
Hispanic	12.03%
Multi-Racial	3.74%
Pacific Islander	.15%
White	36.98%

(Excellence County Schools, 2013)

Research Schools

The three schools in the study made a feeder pattern in which the students from the elementary and middle school attended the same high school. A feeder pattern of schools was selected to explore professional development conversations and instructional practices along the Kindergarten through 12th-grade continuum. The three schools were located in a rural part of the county and served a total of almost 2,700 students. Table 3 provides information about the membership, the number of ELL at each grade level, and the number of ESL teachers assigned to the schools. There is an increase in the number of ELL from elementary to secondary because the study included only of the elementary schools that feeds into the middle school. The second elementary school's ELL student membership makes up the difference to the secondary schools' ELL student membership.

Table 3**Research Schools' Student Membership, ELL Membership, and ESL Teacher Assignments**

Grade Level	12-13 Student Membership	12-13 ELL Student Membership	Number of ESL Teachers Assigned to the School
Kindergarten	68	17	1 fulltime
1st grade	76	13	
2nd grade	76	21	
3rd grade	82	14	
4th grade	85	5	
5th grade	84	4	
Learning Elementary School Total	471	74	
6th grade	327	32	3 fulltime
7th grade	329	34	
8th grade	339	29	
Language Middle School Total	995	95	
9th grade	361	27	2 fulltime
10th grade	323	22	
11th grade	288	20	
12th grade	253	25	
Content High School Total	1225	94	
Total	2691	263	6

(Excellence County Schools, 2013)

As described in previous chapters, across the nation ELL remain one of the lowest performing subgroups of students on state assessments (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007; Garcia & Cuellar, 2006; NC DPI, 2010). The term LEP is used in the following discussion because it is referencing the federal requirements of assessing and reporting disaggregated data by subgroup. Students' performances on state assessments provided a description of how ELL performed on assessments and provided data points for teachers

to examine to meet students' needs, and the district to analyze and determine additional professional development needs. ESL teachers taught English through the language of Math and the language of Reading that provided ELL opportunities to learn content and academic language.

Research Participants

The participant selection process for this study was intentional. In qualitative research, the sample is small and not chosen randomly; the choice of a sample is purposeful (Patton, 1996). I worked with the Director of ESL to identify a feeder pattern of schools whose teachers demonstrate proven effectiveness and who agreed to be part of the study. Effectiveness was determined with the following criteria:

- Increase in WIDA ACCESS scores over time demonstrating students' positive progress with language acquisition
- Observed consistently following the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework for lesson development and delivery. SIOP is a specially designed academic, instructional approach that incorporates specific techniques for ELL to better acquire language in academic contexts like Math, Science, and Social Studies classes (Genesee, 1999). Teachers modify their teaching approaches so that LEP students will understand the subject-specific content while developing their English language proficiency (Echevarria et al., 2006).
- Regular attendance at district ESL meetings and professional development

As listed previously, there were six ESL teachers assigned to the three study schools that form a feeder pattern: an elementary, middle, and high school. All six ESL teachers were invited to participate in the study, but only five participated. The teacher who did not participate was a new mother and did not feel that she could dedicate the time needed to participate in the study. Her nonparticipation did not greatly impact the study since the two other middle school teachers agreed to participate and there was representation from all grade spans.

Table 4 provides background information on each of the participants and is an attempt for the reader to learn a little about each teacher prior to the discussion of findings. Each participant selected his/her own pseudonym for the study to maintain confidentiality.

Table 4

Description of Research Subjects' Teaching Experiences

	Number of years teaching ESL	Number of years at the school	Other teaching licenses, if applicable	Teaching experience outside the US, if applicable
Learning Elementary School				
Sally	13 th year	4 years	Special Education	Columbia -16 years teaching experience
Language Middle School				
Audrey	15 th year	2 years	n/a	n/a
Leo	16 th year	5 years	n/a	Argentina, 7 years teaching experience

Table 4**(Cont.)**

	Number of years teaching ESL	Number of years at the school	Other teaching licenses, if applicable	Teaching experience outside the US, if applicable
Content High School				
Samantha	4 th year	4 years	Speech Language Pathology	n/a
Troy	1 st year	1 year	Middle School Social Studies High School History	n/a

Over the past several years, I had interactions with many ESL teachers because of my personal learning about the ESL program, as a result of looking at student data as part of my professional position, and also in my doctoral courses and assignments. Although I had basic, pre-existing relationships with the teachers, it did not complicate the study. Throughout the research, I felt that each participant was eager to talk with me to share ideas, ask questions, and simply help with the study. I think that each participant was comfortable with me and others throughout the study as demonstrated by the professional dialogues in individual and group interviews.

Performance on State Assessments: Content and Language

In this next section, data regarding the performance of students on both content and language state assessments are provided. These data are included for the sole purpose of describing the schools' students' proficiency levels, not for a discussion regarding achievement. Rather, the data are included to demonstrate the challenges that

ESL teachers have when developing and delivering lessons to ELL when both content and language must be taught. The data for three school years provides performance data over time and represents some of the data reviewed to develop professional development offerings in which ESL teachers participated and discussed in later chapters.

Content: Elementary and Middle Schools (Third through Eighth Grades)

The North Carolina testing model assessed students in grades third through eighth annually in the areas of Reading and Math. The results were reported based on the subgroups as required by No Child Left Behind. Appendix A includes the complete subgroup data for Learning Elementary School (LES) Language Middle School (LMS), and Content High School (CHS). As a reminder, the term limited English proficient (LEP) is used as the state assessment data are described because it is the term associated with the federal accountability requirements.

Reading. The LEP subgroup was either the lowest or second lowest performing subgroup over a three year period (2009–10, 2010–11, and 2011–12) for Learning Elementary School (LES) and Language Middle School (LMS). At LES there were seven subgroups of students each year, and LMS had ten subgroups of students each year. The percentage of middle school students at or above grade level in Reading was significantly below the district and state percentages in all three years and was the lowest performing subgroup of students among the ten subgroups. Although the elementary LEP subgroup was above the district and state percentage of students performing at or above grade level for all years except one, the subgroup mirrored national data in which the subgroup was the second lowest performing subgroup. The Students with Disabilities

subgroup is the only subgroup with lower percentages of students at or above grade level students than LEP.

Math. During the same three year period (2009–10, 2010–11, 2011–12), the Math results were similar to the Reading in that the LEP subgroup was either the lowest or second lowest performing subgroup regarding the percentage of students performing at or above grade level. While the LEP subgroup was second lowest, only the Students with Disabilities subgroup performed below the LEP subgroup. The schools had the same number of subgroups as in Reading; seven at the elementary schools and ten subgroups at the middle school. With the exception of the elementary school in 2009–10, the percentage of students at or above grade level was below the state and district percentages. While LMS experienced annual increases of the percentage of students performing at or above grade level, LES had annual decreases of the percentage of students performing at or above grade level.

These Reading and Math data demonstrated the struggles that LEP students have with the state assessments and the difficult tasks of teaching content and language that ESL teachers face.

High School

In North Carolina, students enrolled in certain courses are required to take state assessments at the conclusion of the course. Initially, state assessments were offered in the following courses: English I, Algebra I, Biology, Physical Science, Physics, Algebra II, Geometry, Civics and Economics, and U.S. History. Starting in the 2011–12 school year, only English I, Algebra I, and Biology were the only required courses with

assessments; all others were eliminated from the state testing program. The high school state assessment data are different from the elementary and middle school data. The state assessment results are not reported based on individual subject areas rather they are combined and disaggregated by student subgroups.

Although this reporting is different, the high school data for the LEP subgroup compared to others is consistent with the elementary and middle school data. Appendix A provides specific data for Content High School (CHS). The LEP subgroup at CHS followed the pattern of the other schools and national data in that the LEP subgroup was either the lowest or second lowest subgroup by percentage of students at or above grade level. The LEP subgroup was also consistently and significantly below the district and state percentages.

Language: WIDA ACCESS

As described in Chapter II, the ACCESS for ELL assesses students in four domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Within each domain, the student receives a score: Level 1 (Entering), Level 2 (Beginning), Level 3 (Developing), Level 4 (Expanding), Level 5 (Bridging), and Level 6 (Reaching). Each student receives a composite score that is a measure based on the four domains. Reading and Writing are weighted more heavily in calculating this composite, demonstrating WIDA's focus on Literacy.

Proficiency in each domain is also determined based on state established proficiency levels. To provide a picture of ELL performance on the ACCESS, all domains are included below because all are interrelated as students acquire English and

all four factor into exiting ESL services. It is important to remember, like many assessments, ACCESS is only a snapshot of the students' performance during the specific testing period. When making instructional decisions, teachers and administrators should use multiple sources of data. A later section will focus specifically on Writing scores over the three-year period.

Elementary. Data in Figures 2, 3, and 4 provide a description of Learning Elementary School's ELL performance on the annual ACCESS for three school years. For elementary ELL, this data provided evidence that students are moving along the language acquisition continuum toward language proficiency. Regarding Listening, the elementary ELL performed at similar levels all three years. The distribution of students among all six proficiency levels for the three school years was similar.

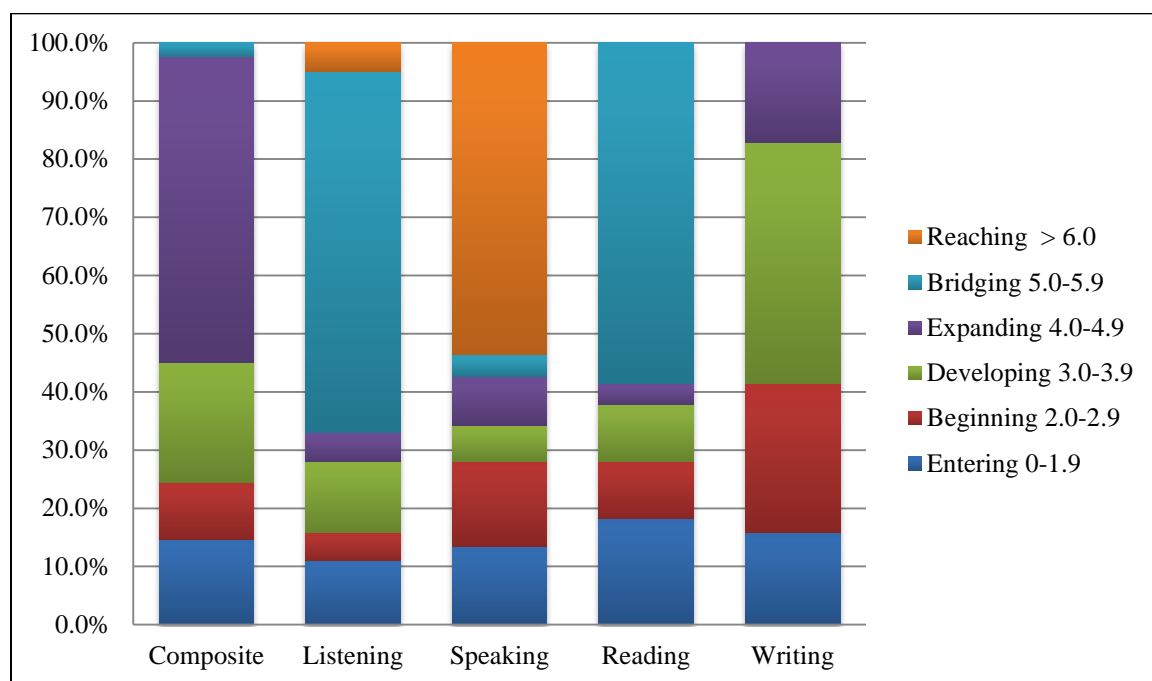


Figure 2. 2009–10 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Learning Elementary School.

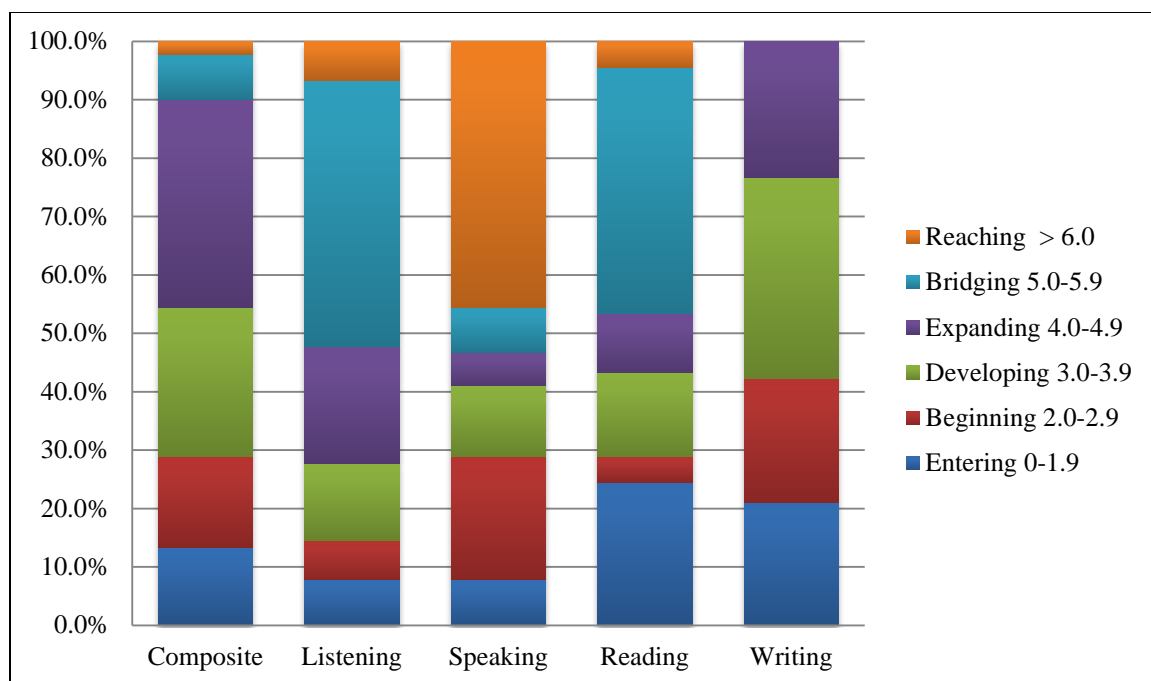


Figure 3. 2010-11 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Learning Elementary School.

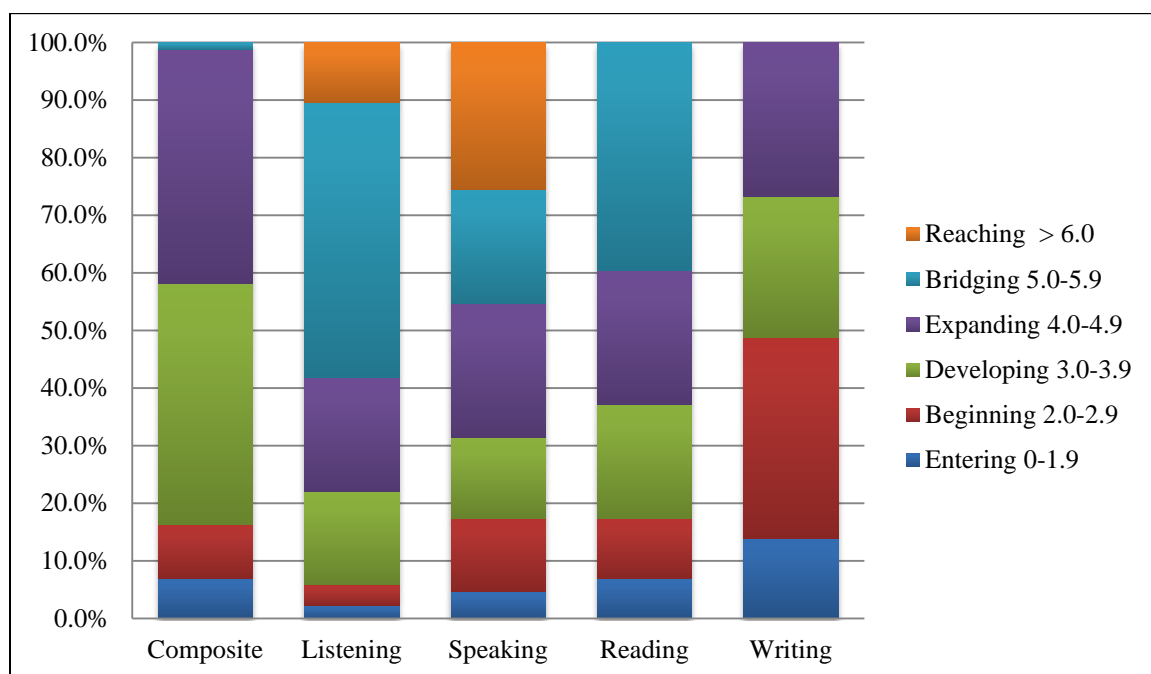


Figure 4. 2011-12 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Learning Elementary School.

The percentage of students performing at the Entering Level, the lowest, has decreased in all domains resulting in more students in the higher levels. There was also an increase in all domains in the Expanding level which is the mid-level performance. This demonstrates continued growth among elementary ELL.

Specific to the distribution of Writing scores over the three year, there are some changes that suggested growth among students. The percentage of students performing at Beginning (Level 2) and Expanding (Level 4) increased. Since there was a decrease in the percentage of students performing at the Developing Level, one can suggest that those students moved to the Expanding Level since there was an increase. Although no students performed at the Bridging and Reaching Levels in all three years for Writing, one should be reminded that research confirms that Writing is one of the last language domains to develop because of the complexity of the writing process to produce a written artifact meeting technical writing requirements (Echevarria et al., 2006).

The Writing data is unlike the Speaking data in that the Speaking domain had the highest percentage of students performing at the highest level, Reaching, in all three years. Oral language develops more quickly among ELL (Echevarria et al., 2006).

Additionally, for ELL to exit ESL services in North Carolina, students must have an overall composite ACCESS score at or above 4.8 and score at least a 4.0 on both of the Reading and Writing subtests (NC DPI, 2012b). Keeping this in mind, students who have already exited the program are no longer assessed, leaving the lower proficiency level students in the program. Therefore, it is understandable as to why there is a small percent of Level 5 (Bridging) and Level 6 (Reaching) for Reading and Writing.

Middle. Data in Figures 5, 6, and 7 offer an overview of how middle school ELL ACCESS results are distributed among the four domains. The percentage of ELL performing at the Entering Level was less than 10% in all of the four domains which is significantly less than in comparison to Learning Elementary School ELL. The middle school had almost 70% of its students performing at the Reaching Level in Speaking, which was the most for any ACCESS level. Although the Speaking percentage in last year decreased, it might reflect that these higher performing students exited services after the 2009–10 and/or the 2010–11 school years. As previously described, to exit services two conditions must be met: (1) composite score of at least 4.8 and (2) scoring at least a 4.0 on the Reading and Writing subtest. On the Reading subtest in 2009–10 almost 40% of the students and in 2010–11, about 20% of the students were performing at Level 4 or higher. In Writing in 2009–10, almost 20% of the students and 10% of the students in 2010–11 were at that level for Writing.

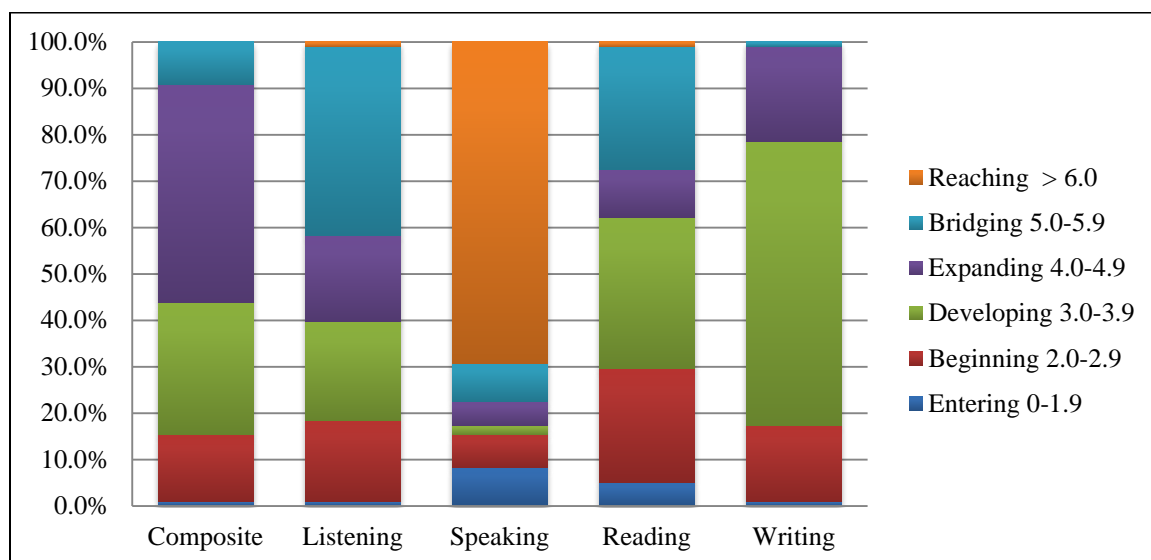


Figure 5. 2009–10 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Language Middle School.

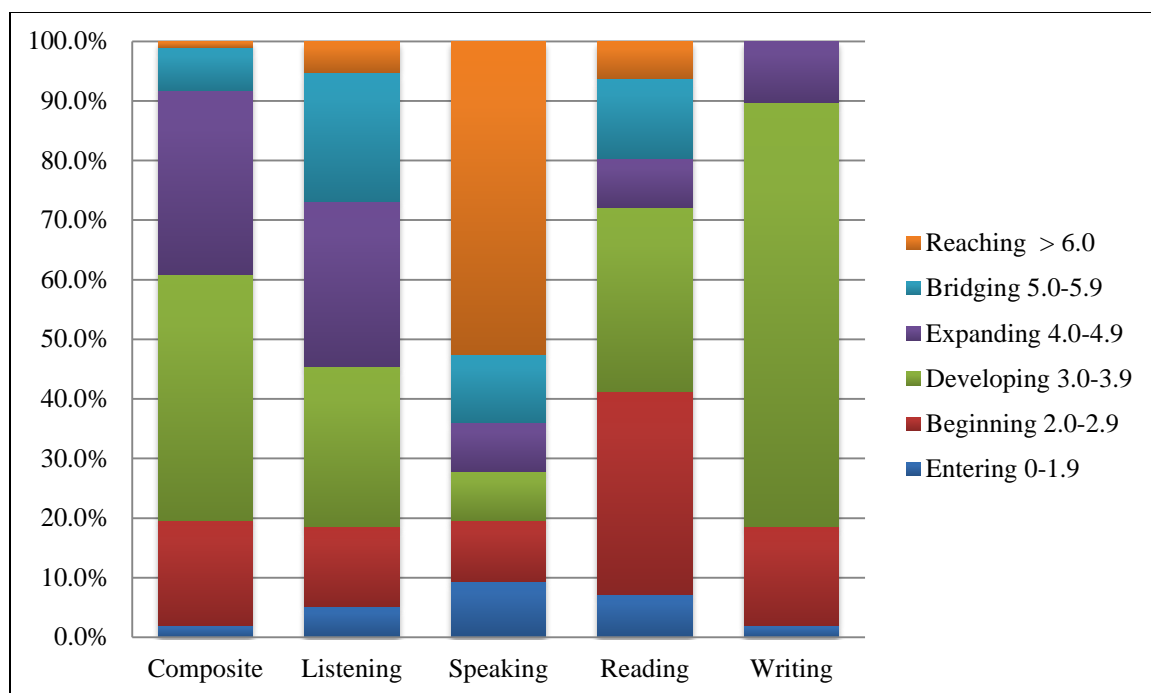


Figure 6. 2010-11 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Language Middle School.

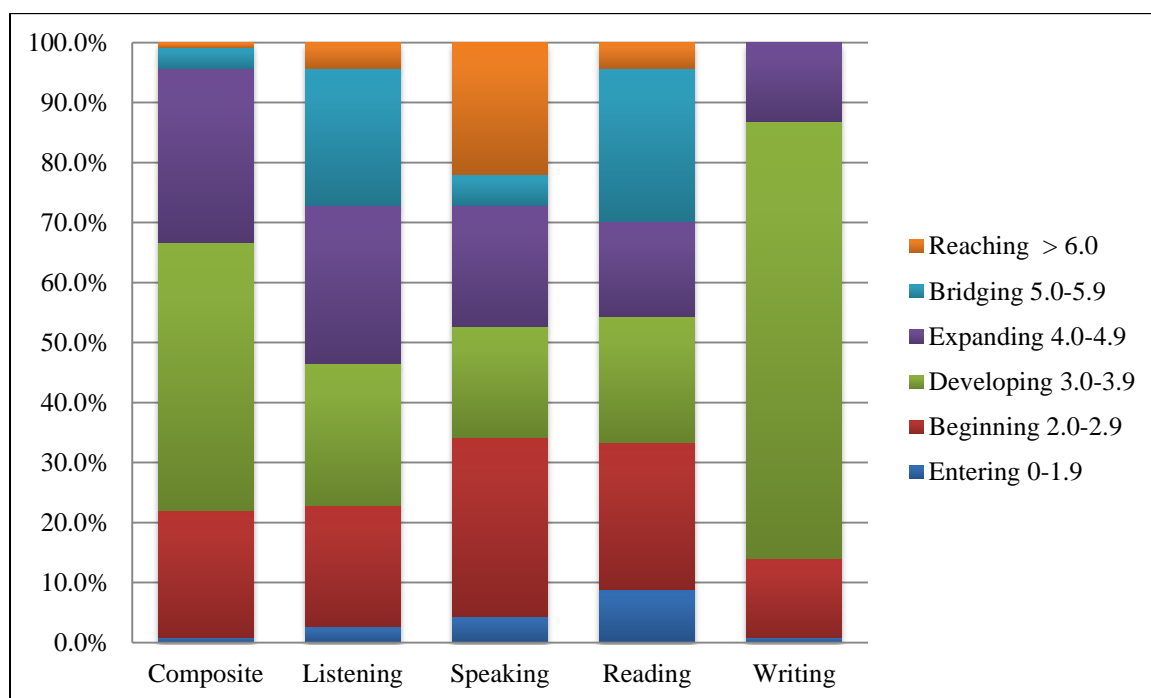


Figure 7. 2011-12 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Language Middle School.

High School. Figures 8, 9, and 10 provide an overview of the high school ACCESS data within the four domains. As with the middle school data, Speaking for Content High School's ELL had the highest percentages of students performing at the Reaching Level. Although there was a slight decrease in the percentage of students at that level in 2011–12, it may represent students having met proficiency levels and exited the ESL program in the 2010–11 school year.

The Writing domain has the lowest percentage of ELL performing at the Entering Level in all three years. These data are similar to the middle school data. This data illustrated the growth among ELL in the area of Writing.

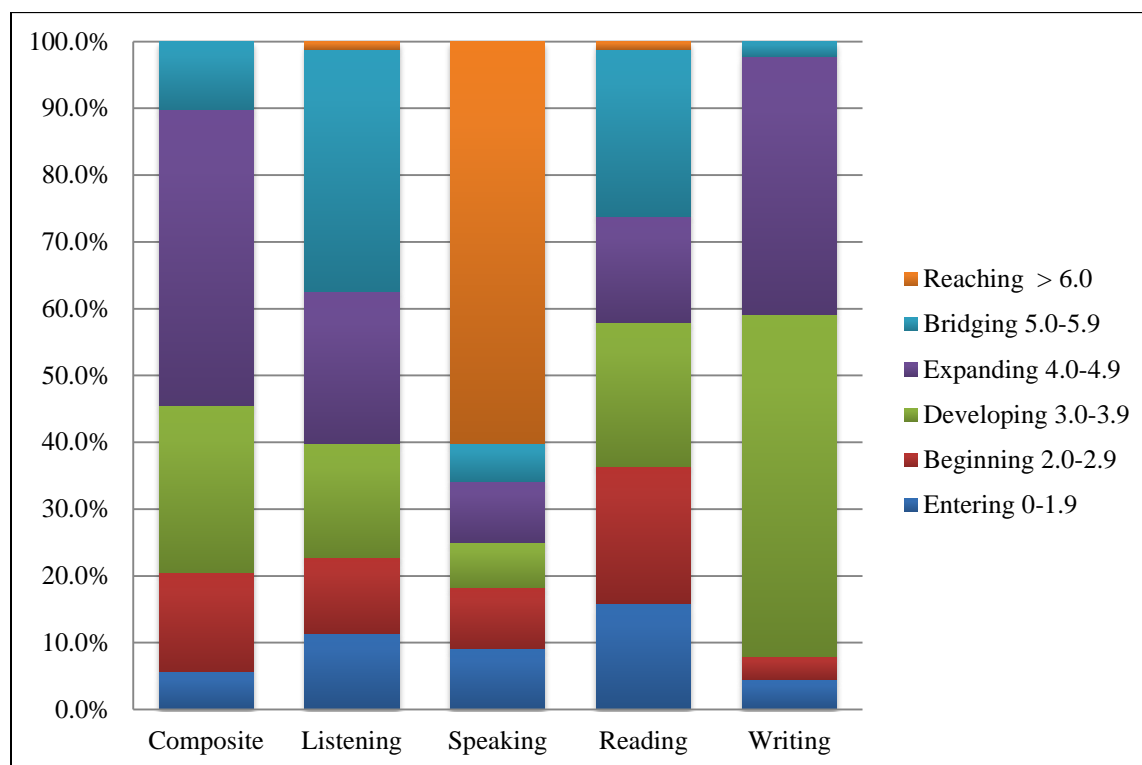


Figure 8. 2009–10 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Content High School.

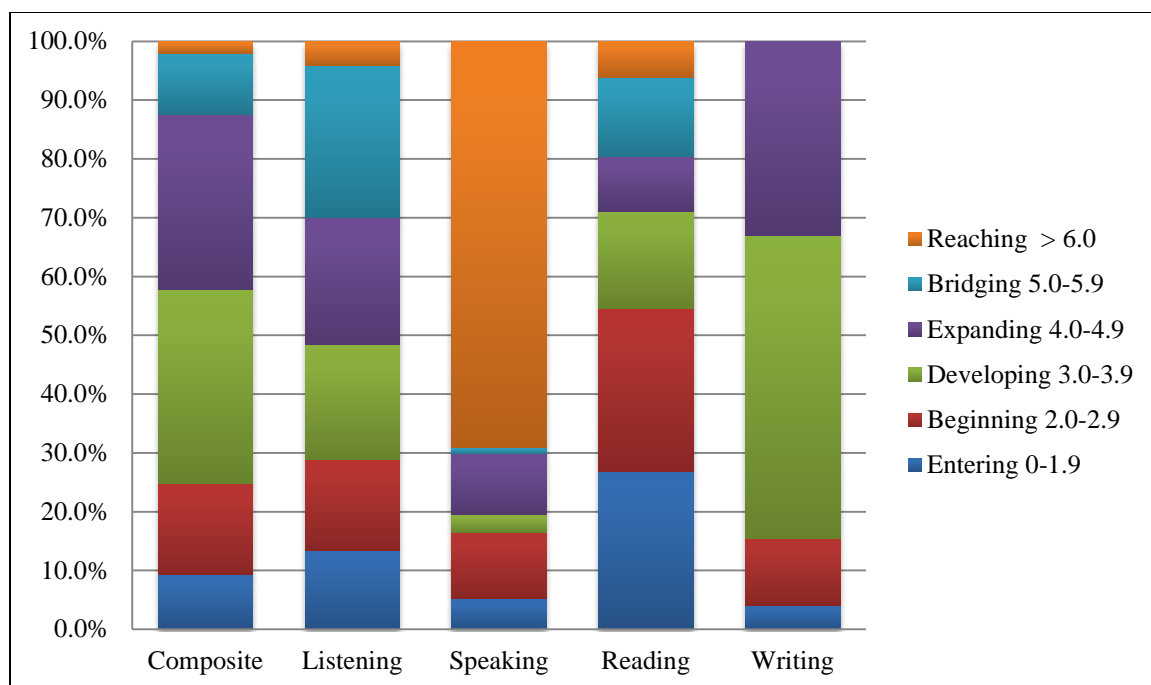


Figure 9. 2010-11 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Content High School.

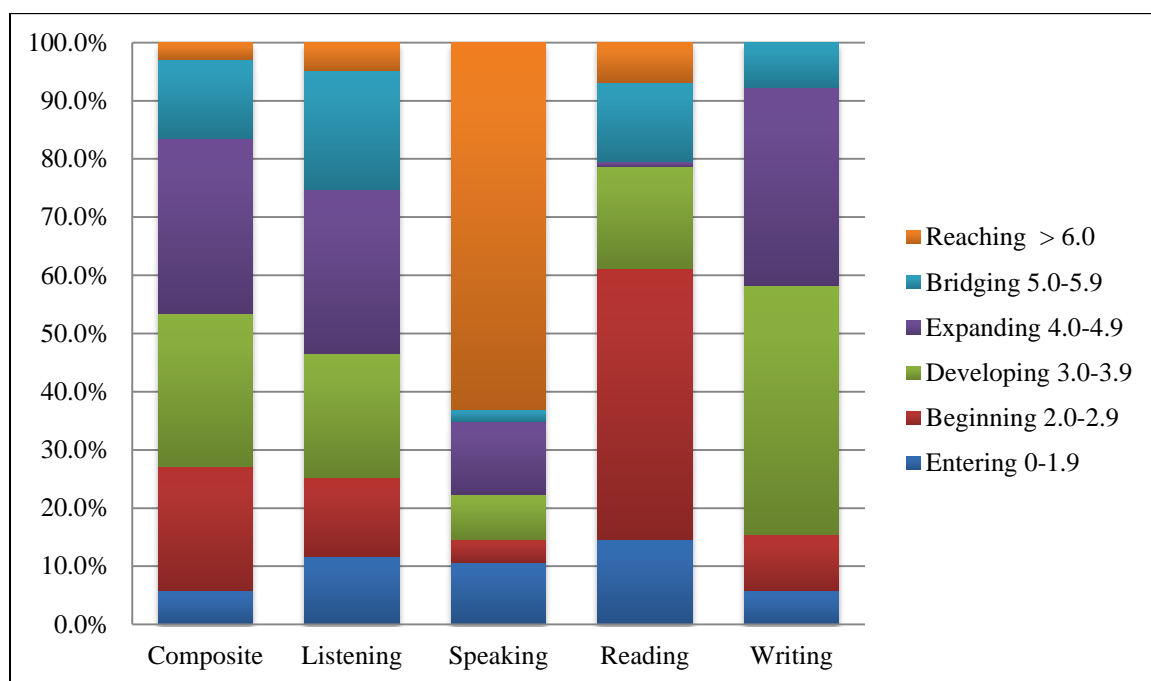


Figure 10. 2011-12 Distribution of ACCESS Data: Content High School.

As described earlier, the composite score is important to determine language proficiency for ELL. Over the three years, the percentage of students with composite scores at the Bridging and Reaching levels increased. These students met the first condition for exiting the ESL program. In 2011–12, slightly over 40% of ELL scored above 4.0 on the Writing subtest and slightly over 20% of ELL scored at least a 4 on the Reading subtest. The distribution of Writing scores for 2011–12 suggested continued growth. In 2010–11 no students performed at the Bridging Level, yet in 2011–12, almost 10% of assessed students performed at that level.

As I continue to describe the schools' profiles regarding ELL in the areas of content and language, the next section will illustrate only the Writing assessment data. This research study was designed to explore how the professional development specific to Writing impacted ESL teachers' lesson development and delivery and what instructional strategies teachers use to support students in the language acquisition process and their progression with Writing.

Writing Scores Comparisons

A comparison of ACCESS Writing scores over the three year period for each of the research schools is provided to demonstrate how the percentage of students performing at each Level changed according to ACCESS data.

Elementary

Data in Figures 11 and 12 provide proficiency level data specific to Writing results over a three year period. Although Learning Elementary School did not have any students performing at the Bridging or Reaching Levels in any of the three years, ELL

performance in Writing improved during the three year period. There was a steady increase of the percentage of ELL performing at the Expanding Level. Even though there was a higher percentage of students performing at the Entering Level in 2010–11 than in 2011–12, the lowest percentage of students was at this level. While the percentage of students performing at the Developing Level decreased, one could offer the suggestion that some of these students have moved to the higher level of Expanding since it has increased in the same time period. Elementary ELL have the highest percentage of students performing at the Entering Level. There was a large increase in the percentage of students performing at the Beginning Level in 2011–12 and the Entering Level had the lowest percentage of students in all three years. One can suggest that Entering Level students moved to Beginning.

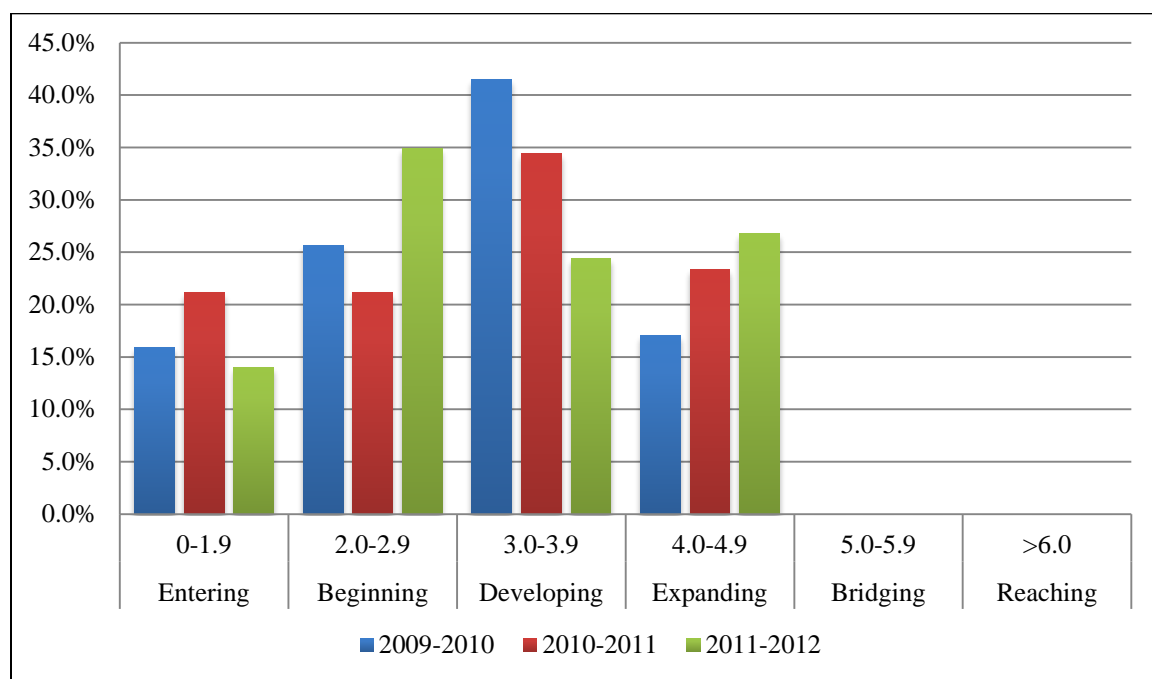


Figure 11. Learning Elementary School Comparative Distribution of ACCESS Writing Scores by Proficiency Level.

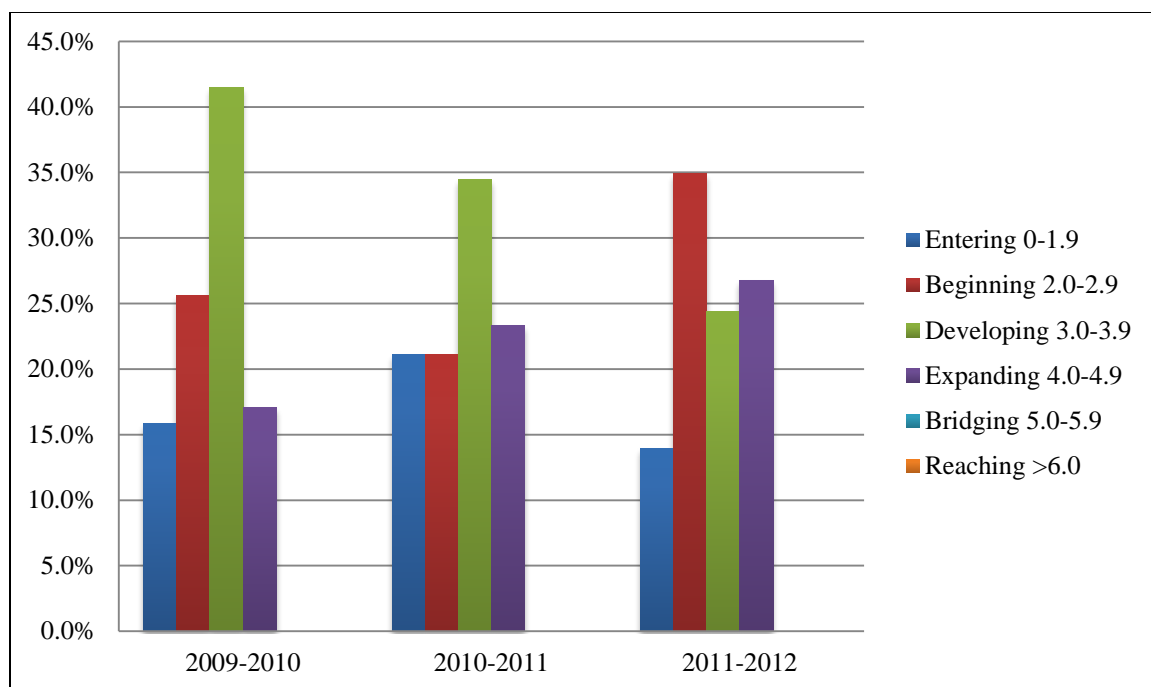


Figure 12. Learning Elementary School Comparative Distribution of ACCESS Writing Scores by Year.

Middle

Figures 13 and 14 provide middle school ELL Writing proficiency level data over a three year period for Language Middle School For Language Middle School, most of the students performed at the Developing Level and the score distribution can be described as an exaggerated bell curve in that most of the students are performing at the middle levels on the continuum, while the lowest percentages of students are performing at the ends: Entering and Bridging. No middle school ELL achieved the Bridging or Reaching Levels in 2010–11 and 2011–12. Over the years, there was a slight decrease within the Beginning Level and some increase in the Developing Level, so one can suggest that some of the students moved to the Developing Level. Also with the low

percentage of students at the higher levels, students may have exited ESL services and no longer tested.

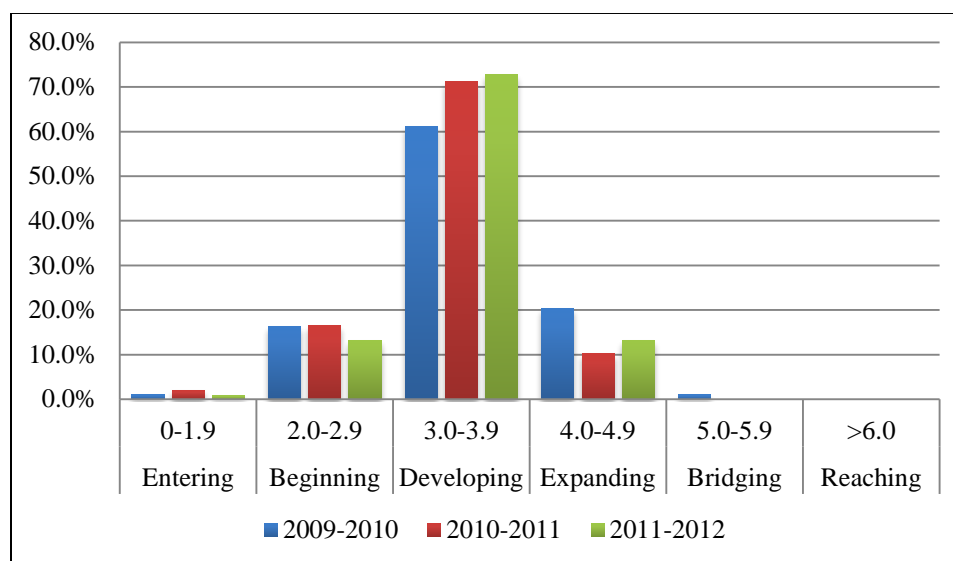


Figure 13. Language Middle School Comparative Distribution of ACCESS Writing Scores by Proficiency Level.

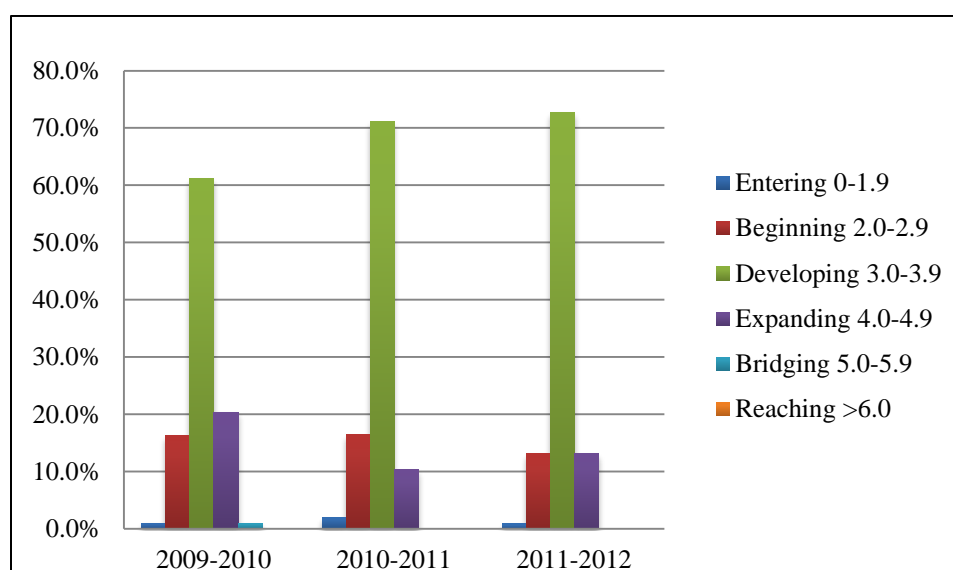


Figure 14. Language Middle School Comparative Distribution of ACCESS Writing Scores by Year.

High School

Over the three-year period, the high school ELL consistently had the largest percentages of students performing at the Developing and Expanding Levels (see Figures 15 and 16). In 2011–12, high school ELL experienced an increase in the Bridging Level after having no students performing at that level the previous year. Although the data resembles a bell curve in that most of the students are performing at the middle levels, the curve is slightly positive skewed suggesting that students are progressing towards the higher levels of Bridging and Reaching.

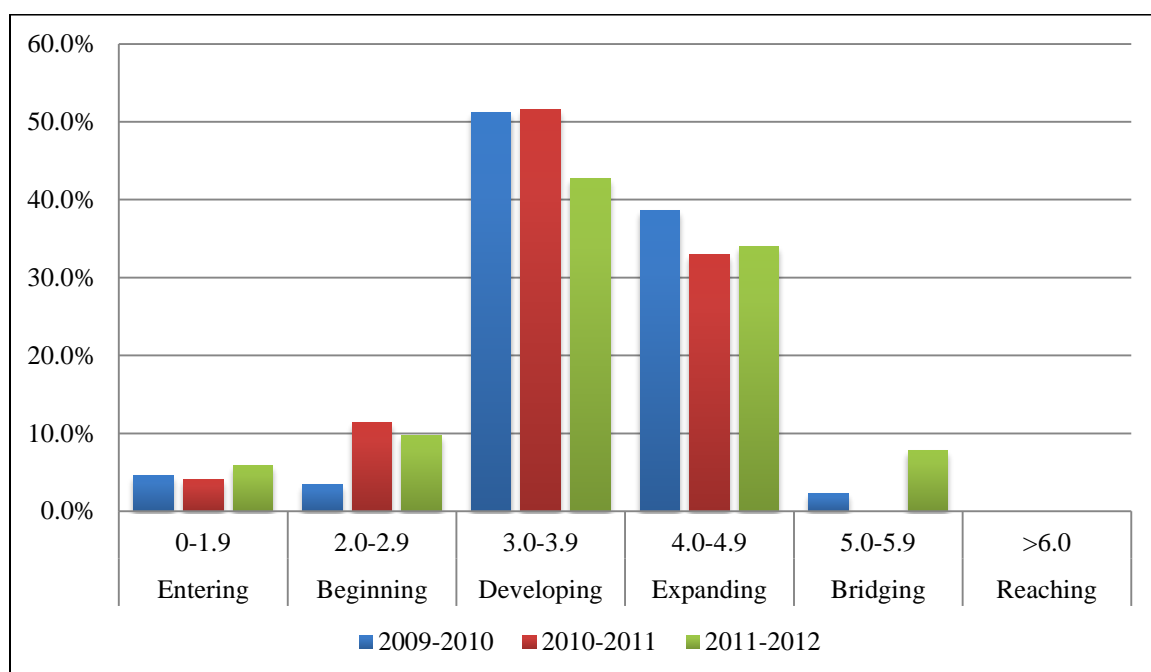


Figure 15. Content High School Comparative Distribution of ACCESS Writing Scores by Proficiency Level.

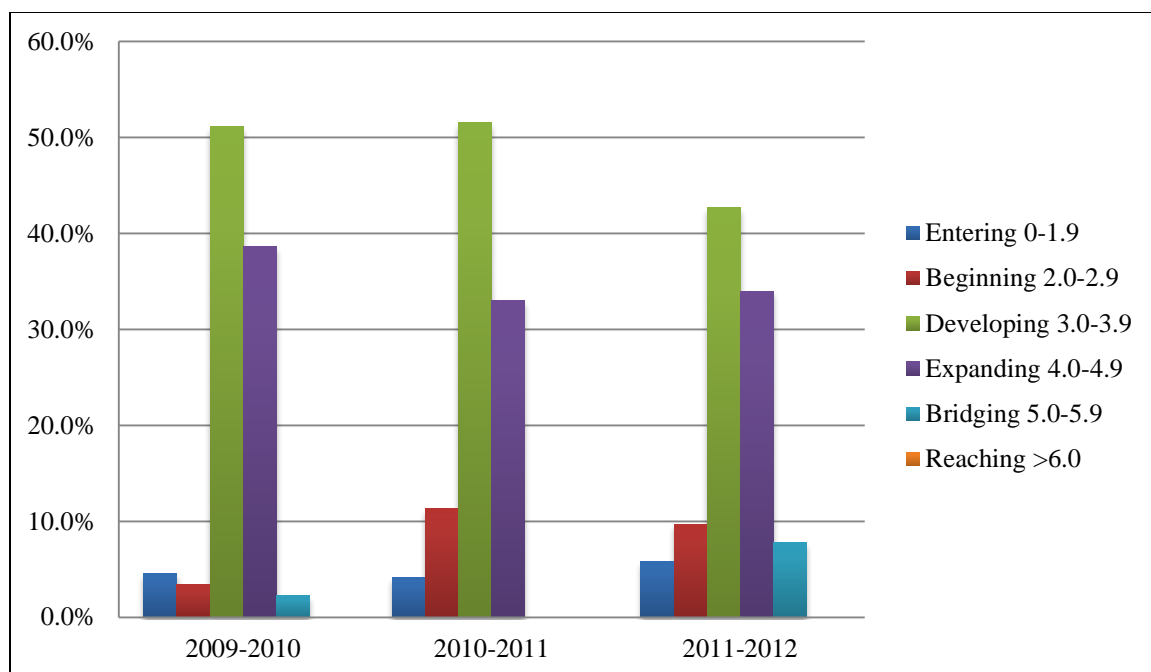


Figure 16. Content High School Comparative Distribution of ACCESS Writing Scores by Year.

Comparison Growth within the Writing Domain

To continue building the profile of the schools and reviewing student performance in the area of Writing, growth data added another layer of information. Reviewing growth data provided a look into changes in proficiency levels (PL) over time. Cook, Boals, Wilmes, and Santos (2008) described ELL proficiency levels growth and anticipated growth; lower grade levels and proficiency levels grow faster than higher grade levels and proficiency levels. As students progress in language acquisition, they encounter more complex concepts and standards. Therefore, as students move up in the proficiency levels, the growth slows. Within each proficiency level band, growth can also be measured, because scores are measured in tenths. For example, a student may score a 3.1 one school year in Writing and then a 3.9 the following school year. Even

though the student remains at the Developing Level, the student experienced positive growth of .8. The movement within levels is important to review the difference between years within each band. Additionally, when looking at students at higher proficiency levels, the interval of growth is important to review for supporting positive growth among them. Figure 17 illustrates the average growth of the three research schools combined, comparing three years of data within the proficiency level bands.

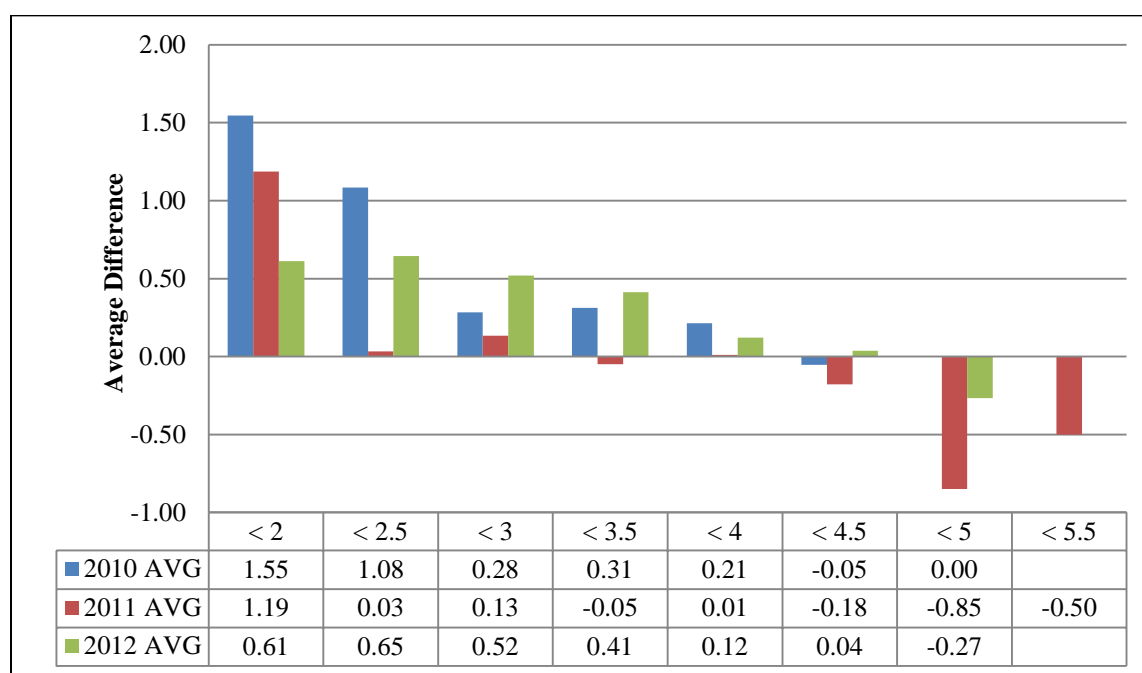


Figure 17. Annual Average Differences for Research Schools.

First, the description by Cook et al. (2008) of growth being greater when the proficiency levels were lower and growth being slower when the proficiency levels were higher is true for this data. Secondly, it is noted here with possible explanations provided in subsequent sections that there are noticeable uncertainties with the 2011 data. The 2011 data does not follow Cook et al.'s notation of declining growth at higher levels

because the negative growth occurred in proficiency levels where it did not occur in the other years, both in Figure 14 and school level data.

Although the distribution of the data for 2010 and 2011 is slightly different, the trends are similar and supported Cook et al.'s notation in that there is higher growth for students in the lower proficiency levels (PL) and less growth at the higher proficiency levels (PL). There was more significant growth in $PL < 2$ and $PL < 2.5$ as compared to $PL < 3.0$, $PL < 3.5$, $PL < 4.0$. The negative growth begins at $PL < 4.5$. In the cases of negative growth, the students that are performing at the higher language proficiency levels are scoring lower than they did the previous year.

To see the growth at each of the three schools, each having different data distributions as compared in Figure 17, data in the next sections illustrate the average growth of ELL based on three school year's ACCESS Writing data over the same three year time span. Each has unique anomalies, yet some of the trends seen in Figure 14 are still present.

Elementary

The Language Elementary School data were aligned with Cook et al.'s (2008) explanation of lower grades having higher growth. Although there was positive growth each year, the average growth, generally, decreased as the proficiency levels increased. Learning Elementary School had positive average growth in each proficiency level, except in 2011, and the negative growth occurred at the highest proficiency level students obtained, $PL < 4.5$ (see Figure 18).

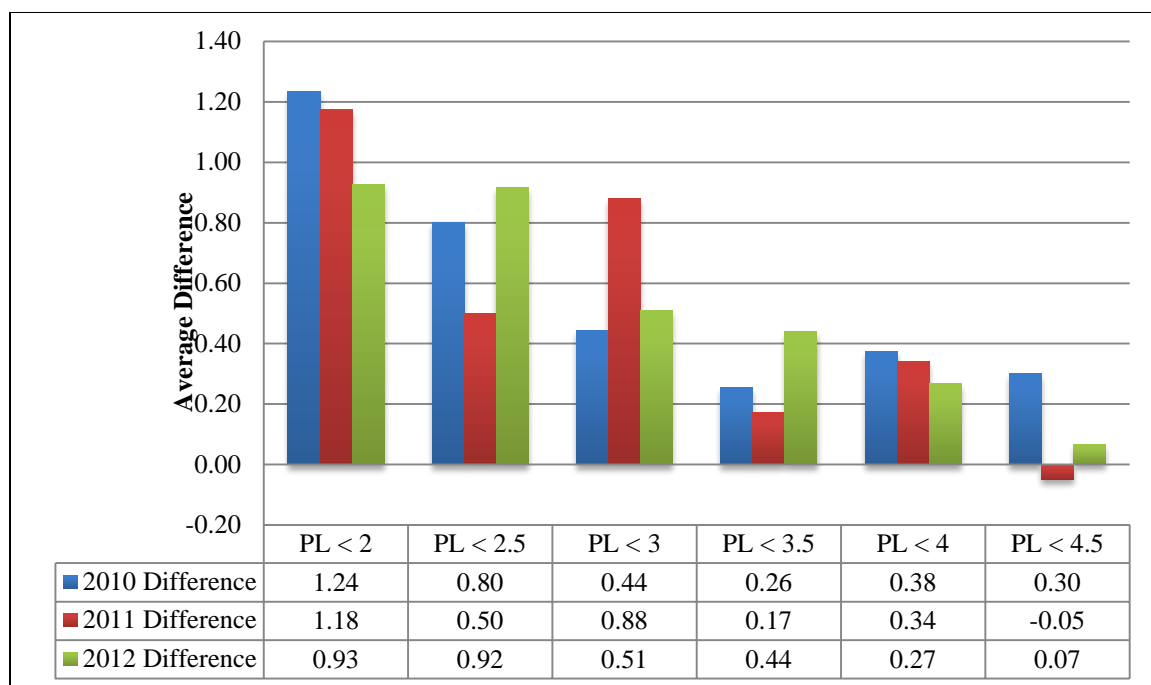


Figure 18. Learning Elementary School Average Annual Differences by Proficiency Bands in Writing.

It should be noted that at the elementary level, no students performed at the two highest proficiency levels in Writing. Therefore, the significant positive growth in the lower levels was expected. The positive growth at the proficiency levels through 2.0 was significant for all three years. The positive growth continued to the PL < 2.5 in 2012 having the highest average of difference between years. In 2011, PL < 3 there was a significant difference between the other years, and students experienced on average a .8 increase. There was significant growth with elementary ELL.

Middle

Language Middle School data included in Figure 19 were quite different from the elementary data. First, the middle school data contained ELL who obtained a PL < 5.5 as

compared to elementary ELL who scored only as high as PL < 4.5. Therefore, the middle school ELL have achieved higher language proficiency levels demonstrating growth over time since there were no ELL at this level in first two comparison years. Even though students achieved these levels, the average growth was negative. So within those bands the students scored lower than the previous years.

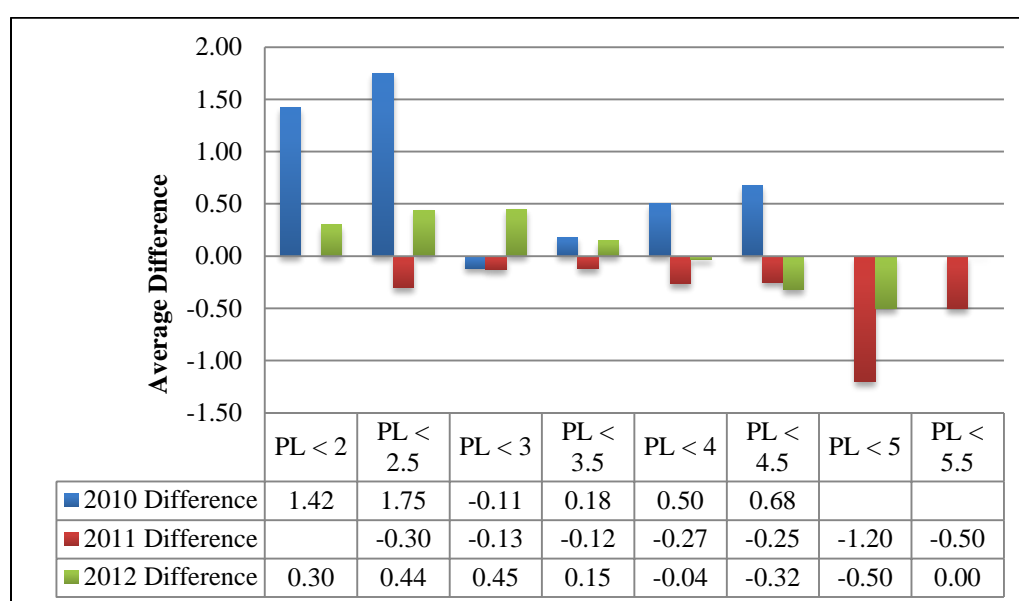


Figure 19. Language Middle School Average Annual Differences by Proficiency Bands in Writing.

There was significant growth in 2010 at the lower end of the proficiency continuum, as to be expected. Also in 2010, there was an interesting trend within the PL < 3.5, PL < 4.0, and PL < 4.5. The average positive growth increased like stair steps among these three bands when at that level decreases usually occur. The positive growth at the intermediate levels of proficiency demonstrated continued growth among middle school students.

The average differences for 2011 in all proficiency bands were negative. It is surprising to see this trend for that year after the previous year having several bands with positive growth, even if small. Various factors could have contributed to the negative growth which may include changes on the test or a modified grading rubric compared to the previous year.

High School

Content High School Data in Figure 20 demonstrated growth among students over time with surprising growth data trends in the final year. The 2010 Content High School, like other schools, illustrated the idea that lower proficiency levels have faster growth while the high proficiency levels have slow growth. Up to $PL < .5$, there was an average of at least 1.2 increase. Then from $PL < 3$ to $PL < 4.5$, there is slower growth as compared to lower proficiency levels with no more than .59 average differences from the previous year. Negative growth occurred at the $PL < 4.0$ for the first time. Like the middle school, the difference for 2011 was all negative except for $PL < 2.0$.

With both the middle school and high school having negative growth in most bands in 2011, one can suggest that something systematically changed since both schools had such differences from the previous year. Despite this data, 2012 had only positive growth at each level, demonstrating significant growth. Interestingly, the data did not follow Cook et al.'s description discussed for 2010 and with other schools. With the exception of $PL < 2$, which had the greatest average positive growth, the average growth for student scoring at $PL < 4$, $PL < 4.5$, and $PL < 5$ was higher than the average growth in

the other bands. For students at PL < 6.0, the average growth was 1.6, a significant increase.

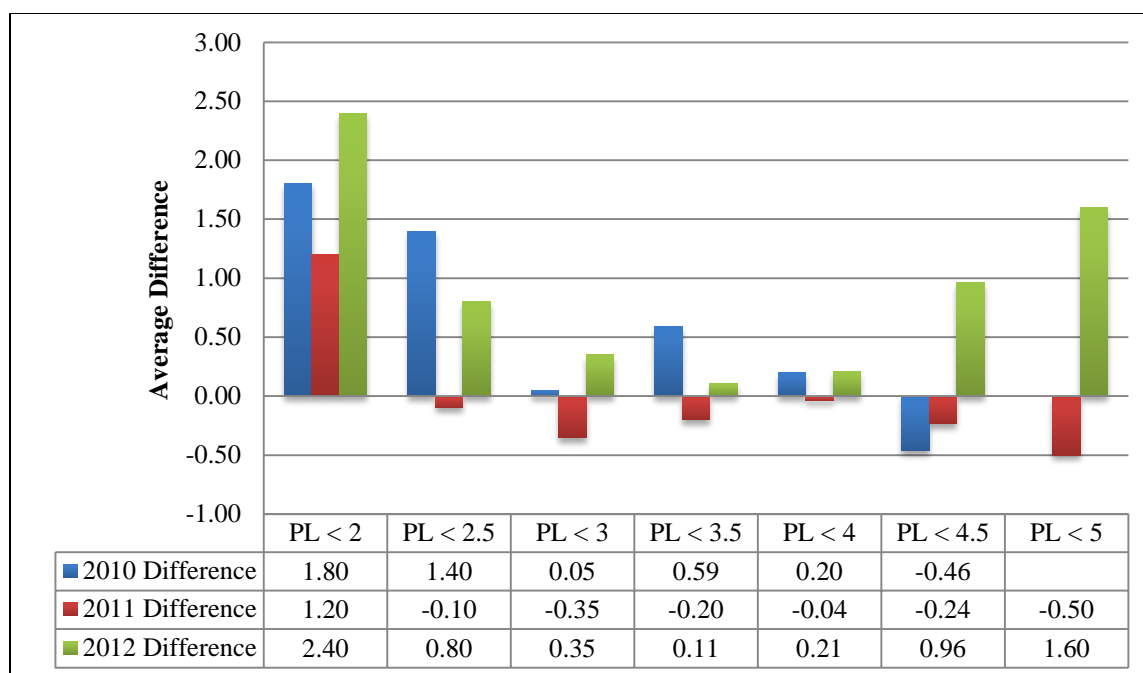


Figure 20. Content High School Average Annual Differences by Proficiency Bands in Writing.

The data in Figures 17–20 validated the inquiry in this study. Despite some abnormalities in the data, such as the 2011 data, ELL were performing as research suggested. Generally, the lower proficient students achieved the greatest average growth while the higher proficient students experienced less growth. As the data are disaggregated by school, there are interesting differences about the positive growth. It is these differences that started the inquiry for this study in terms of the effect of professional development on lesson design and delivery in Writing that is impacting student growth.

Data Collection

The primary objective of the study was to explore the professional development offerings and the perceived impact of professional development on teachers' lesson development and delivery. It was not the goal to determine how successful any specific professional development offering was, but rather to gain an inside perspective on what components and strategies contribute to the successful students' Writing scores of these teachers. I wanted to learn about teachers' perspectives regarding professional development. The study used an on-line survey, interviews, and aggregated student ACCESS data as data sources.

First, data were collected through an on-line survey (Appendix B). Each of the study participants completed it in less than 15 minutes and selected pseudonyms at that time. They provided background information about their teaching experience both in the United States and elsewhere, since many ESL teachers in the district are from other countries, the number of years in education, number of years at their current school, certifications beyond their ESL certification, and professional development sessions that he/she completed over the past three years.

Next, interviews were conducted with each of the five teachers to gather perception data about the professional development that was offered. These interviews were conducted at either a school or an administrative office; the choice was the subjects and was based on schedules and availability. Group interviews were also conducted, yet they were independent of the individual interviews. All of the group interviews were

held at Content High School, the teachers' choice. The table below lists the dates, locations, and duration of all of the interviews.

Table 5

Individual and Group Interviews Information: Date, Location, and Length

	Individual Interview #1	Group Interview #1	Individual Interview #2	Group Interview #2	Group Interview #3
Audrey	– 3/20/13 – Admin. Office – 61 minutes	– 3/15/13 – High School – 65 minutes	– 4/30/13 – Middle School – 50 minutes	– 4/24/13 – High School – 67 minutes	– 6/6/13 – High School – 79 minutes
Leo	– 3/11/13 – Admin. Office – 66 minutes		– 4/30/13 – Middle School – 64 minutes		
Sally	– 3/21/13 – Admin. Office – 60 minutes		– 4/30/13 – Elementary School – 65 minutes		
Samantha	– 3/11/13 – High School – 58 minutes		– 4/22/13 – High School – 56 minutes		
Troy	– 3/14/13 – High School – 45 minutes		– 4/25/13 – High School – 52 minutes		

Lastly, aggregated student ACCESS scores were discussed in the final group session. Teachers did not discuss individual students or use individual student's names. Rather, they reflected on and spoke about performance of the ELL on either a school level or by grade levels. No attempt was made to discuss individual students or their performance data. The mention of aggregate test data connected our conversations about professional development, instructional strategies, and students' outcomes.

Since the focus of this study was the perceptions of the ESL teachers and not the student classroom outcomes, my applications for research with the university and school district were clear that only aggregated student data would be reviewed. The aggregated data were reviewed with the ESL teachers and their thoughts of student performance and what they did specific to lesson development and delivery that was learned in professional development which may have contributed to positive student performance. The study was approved by both the university's International Review Board (IRB) and the district's Research Review Committee with this approach (Appendix C).

Interviews

Individual. Qualitative researchers are immersed in each situation and participants' interactions during data collection, and they do not manipulate situations. Rather they watch events and listen to dialogues as they unfold naturally without controlling them (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I used my overarching question as a guide for the conversations allowing participants to discuss and reflect.

Both individual interviews were semi-structured (Appendix D) with each teacher responding to questions about his/her perceptions of the training opportunities, the translation of information from the training to implementation in the classroom, and ultimately the impact of the professional development on student achievement. Specifically in the first interview, I asked the teachers to focus on professional development they participated in during first semester of the school year and previous years attempting to gain insight into their past experiences. The average length of the first interviews with the five participants was 58 minutes. The second individual

interviews again focused on the teachers' perceptions. However, this time, the focus was on the second semester professional development opportunities, components of professional development and how these components related to the teacher's continuous learning, and finally the teachers reflected and described what evidence they have that the professional development impacted student achievement. The average length of the second individual interviews was again 58 minutes.

Merriam (2009) characterized the researcher as the primary data collection and analysis tool. Fieldwork consisted of inductive research focusing on a process, determining a meaning and understanding responses and observations to provide a rich, descriptive product. I found that as I listened to responses I identified follow-up and clarifying questions to ensure that I understood the teachers' responses. Analysis occurred during each interview, indicative of qualitative research. As I took notes during the interview, I dedicated a column to write my questions to ask as follow-up with the individuals either during that session or subsequent interviews, questions/topics that I wanted to explore in the group sessions, and also topics that might be of interest for further investigation in another study.

Group professional development sessions. There were three group professional development sessions during the study. As previously stated, the individual and group interviews were independent of each other, and the first group session took place before I conducted all of the individual interviews. Again the overarching questions about the influence of professional development on lesson development and delivery were posed in a semi-structured format to allow the dialogue with the teachers to progress naturally

among them. The dialogue explored benefits of vertical planning and professional development in vertical teams and instructional strategies learned during professional development and implemented during the year.

The final group session was held a week after the teachers received the 2012-13 ACCESS scores and during the week prior to summer vacation beginning. The interview lasted 79 minutes and it engaged teachers in conversation about their student data. The ACCESS data is received annually to determine the level of language acquisition of each student and should impact future lesson preparation and delivery. For this session, unlike others, the teachers were asked to prepare to talk about the (1) reactions to the ACCESS results as a school and grade levels, (2) thoughts about what may have influenced these scores, specifically Writing, and (3) what professional development impacted the overall positive scores. It was emphasized to the ESL teachers as we started the final session to not discuss or reveal individual student data because the focus of the study was on their professional development experiences and how their learning translated to the their lesson design and lesson delivery. Of course, the desired outcome was increased student academic achievement, but our conversations would center on them as teachers, their practice, and aggregated student data.

Data Analysis

Each individual interview was recorded and transcribed. I reviewed each transcript multiple times and coded them based on identified themes and concepts. I used an analysis process I used with classmates during a group project in a qualitative research course. This cyclical process utilized components such as gathering data, asking

questions, and finding meaning in the participants' responses as outlined by Lichtman (2010). The concepts and themes that emerged from the data provided insight from the teachers' experiences for commonalities to be determined so that explanations for the phenomenon of systematic professional development for ESL teachers in the area of Writing could be created.

Thirteen themes were identified from the first interview I analyzed. These identified themes were included in a matrix where each subject's supporting statements for each theme were noted using the line number within the transcriptions. After I analyzed the second individual interview, six additional themes were identified and were included in the matrix. Once all five first interviews were coded and included in the matrix, each theme was reviewed to determine if it was a unique theme or if it could be combined with another.

After each group interview I reviewed my notes for information that supported themes already identified in the matrix, questions to ask in upcoming interviews, and also possible future research. I used the same process for the three group interviews as I did with the individual interviews regarding using the matrix to categorize data teachers provided. The group interviews were recorded but not transcribed; that would have been a difficult task with six different voices (five teachers and me). Therefore, I listened to the recordings of the three group sessions several times and added supporting statements to the matrix.

Next, a comparison of the data collected to the literature was conducted to determine the connection of the identified themes and any possible omissions or gaps in

this study. Once the themes were finalized and the analysis completed, I determined relationships between teachers' responses and the identified themes. From there, the information was organized to tell the teachers' stories about their experiences with professional development, instructional strategies implemented in the classroom, and measures of effectiveness. Finally, I identified potential implications and recommendations based on the study.

Subjectivity

Whenever I worked on process enhancement as part of my professional responsibilities, I attempted to separate myself from situations by not using names as part of a discussion. Rather, I referred to positions and processes to be sure that improvement and enhancement activities were not perceived to be personal. I used the same principles while continuously review information (student achievement data, anecdotal information, and implementation data) to determine next steps in the continued work to meet the academic needs of teachers and students. However, I do hold a vested interest in the program and the people. Relationships developed over time; therefore, thoughts and feelings were recorded in a formal way so that they were noted for the sole use of the researcher and limited the impact on the study. Some of the ideas the teachers discussed were my ideas and not well received. This was not taken personally; instead it is information that will help inform next decisions and steps to better meet teacher and student academic needs. I was familiar with all three schools selected for the study and most of the teachers assigned to the schools. Although I interact with the ESL programs, my familiarity with the teachers and program did not complicate my conduct of the study.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was insured by implementing a variety of strategies. Using teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools allowed me to identify different perspectives, potential gaps, and possible variances among what is believed to be successful at different locations. Aggregated student data was used to triangulate data between what teachers said about how they used what they learned in professional development in individual interviews, and their dialogues and discussions within the group sessions. Member checking was used with each person interviewed to review the data collected to determine if they were in agreement with the information collected from their individual interviews. Member checking also provided an opportunity for reflection which was captured in the group professional development sessions. After each interview, participants were encouraged to email or call me if they thought about additional information they wanted to share.

Benefits and Risks

The benefits to the participants in the study were the opportunities to provide information about the ESL program, the potential to share thoughts and suggestions that could impact the continuous improvement of the ESL instructional program to positively impact student achievement, and reflective practice to enhance current teaching practices. Although the information was kept confidential, due to the pre-existing relationship with the program, some may have felt some initial uncomfortableness, but I did not notice any teacher holding back information during the interviews. Some participants could have

perceived the risk of providing honest feedback to have repercussions, but that did not seem the case throughout the study.

One of the greatest benefits for participants of this study was the opportunity for ESL teachers to share their stories regarding the ESL program at their schools. This reflective experience yielded increased awareness of the beliefs, attitudes, and practices that affect the success of ELL in the area of Writing. An opportunity to review the findings also provided participants with the benefit of learning about other teachers' perspectives and providing a review of the research that will assist schools in making adjustments to their practice. The opportunity to participate in this study provided school personnel the experience of being recognized as a successful program from which other teachers are attempting to learn.

Several risks were acknowledged with this study. Due to only studying three schools, schools could potentially be identified for their participation. To protect against this, pseudonyms were utilized for the school system, each school, and individual participants. Another risk was the possibility that a specific program may have unfavorable characteristics when reviewed against another program within the same district or across the state. Although it was also possible that participants could have viewed the study as evaluative in nature due to the fact that I am a central office administrator, this did not occur. Each participant referred to me by my first name. There were lighthearted conversations as part of each interview, and teachers were eager to talk to me about their suggestions and opinions.

Limitations

My previous relationship to the ESL program in this qualitative study could be viewed by some as a limitation to the study. However, based on my involvement and past interactions with teachers, I think I had some advantages because I established rapport with the teachers. In doing so, I felt that the participants provided honest and critical feedback despite my role as the researcher.

Another limitation was that the study's focus was on the ESL Department's professional development offerings, but the teachers' collective professional development experiences influenced the way in which teachers design and implement lessons. There is no way to isolate just the ESL Department's professional development.

Additionally, the results cannot be generalized to other school systems or schools because this study only included one group of teachers. However, much of the data provided was aligned to research and took a systematic approach to professional development all of which might be advantageous for other departments and school systems to consider.

Summary

The qualitative research design allowed me to interact with teachers during individual, semi-structured interviews and with teachers as a vertical team as they dialogued with one another about their teaching practices. With a qualitative research design, data about the unique experiences of ESL teachers were collected to gain a deeper understanding of the ESL teachers' experiences in translating their knowledge and skills gained from professional development into their lesson plans and lesson delivery.

The data collected were categorized into themes that encompassed many topics of discussion including: why teach Writing?; the relationship between Writing and Reading/Literacy; how teachers learned to teach Writing; instructional strategies used to teach Writing and the connection to SIOP; and professional development—the offerings, changes in offerings over time, and the perceptions of the experiences with professional development. It is in the next chapter that I will tell the story of the elementary, middle, and high school ESL teachers who shared their experiences, their opinions, and thoughts with me.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, PART I: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON READING AND WRITING, INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Chapter III, I discussed the four research questions that guided the qualitative study. Questions posed during interviews were designed to gather information from the ESL teachers as to what instructional strategies they used to support ELL progress in Writing. The remaining questions revolved around professional development specific to Writing. First, I explored how ESL teachers think that professional development affected their lesson delivery. Next, from the ESL teacher perspective, I attempted to determine the impact of professional development on their lesson development and lesson delivery. Finally, I discovered the teachers' perceptions of the professional development offerings specific to Writing.

I organized Chapter IV based on the categories and themes that emerged throughout the study. I began by describing the teachers' perspectives about the relationship between Reading and Writing, why Writing is taught, and what instructional strategies they use to teach Writing and how they know that the instructional strategies are effective. Next, the professional development experiences were explored to determine desired characteristics of ESL professional development and their opinions about the changes to the professional development offerings over the past couple of years. Finally, teachers provided their ideas about a new professional development

course for ESL teachers for Writing that they felt would meet their needs to better support students. Their comments, reflections, and insights were honest, constructive, and well-intended.

Findings

Though my personal learning process of asking questions, reviewing data, and seeing ESL teachers in classrooms, my interest regarding professional development offerings for ESL teachers and the impact on student outcomes developed into intrigue.

Before I delved into specific questions about the instructional strategies used to teach Writing, the teachers were clear in their position that Writing was not and cannot be viewed as separate from Reading. There is an inseparable connection between the two, and one cannot be taught without the other.

Teachers' Perspectives of the Relationship between Reading and Writing

Early in the interviews, each teacher acknowledged that there is a relationship between Reading and Writing that cannot be disconnected. Leo, one of teachers at Language Middle School, felt that “from experience you’re not going to be able to teach Reading without Writing, and you’re not going to be able to teach Writing without Reading. They are two complementary skills, so they go together all the time.” Audrey, the other middle school teacher, continued the point by describing how she has “always taught Writing as part of everything else. It’s been integrated within the lesson.” Samantha explained her perspective about the relationship between Reading and Writing by describing her high school students during Writing lessons.

I think when students write they are organizing their thoughts. They are practicing their spelling. They are practicing the way they speak, and I think that that really does roll over into, especially the spelling part. I've see it not only with my students but I see it with my own children, you let them write and write and write and all of a sudden they're wanting to read more because they know how to sound out words. Because you have to sound out words to write, so you need to sound out words to read, you know. I mean it's that simple, I think.

Since there was agreement among the teachers that there is an inseparable relationship between Reading and Writing, I understood very quickly that the teachers rarely participate in professional development that is just about Writing. Instead, Writing components were actually embedded in each of the ESL Department's professional development offerings because Writing is part of the language acquisition process. Both Samantha and Audrey gave the comparisons of learning another language and how Reading and Writing have to be taught simultaneously because of the relationship between the two. Samantha summarized their thoughts about Writing professional development and the relationship between Reading and Writing.

There hasn't been enough professional developments for Writing, and I think that is because it is such a hard thing to teach in one session. . . . I mean it's sort of a process. It's like learning to speak. Or learning to read. . . . I can't teach you to read Chinese right now, today, and expect you to be able to write and read Chinese. So I think that's one of the hard things about professional development in Writing, it's just not something that you can do in five sessions.

Sally, the elementary teacher, talked about when a student is struggling with the language acquisition process; he/she also struggles with Writing because it is one of the last steps in the process. "So if they struggle with reading that means that the student's writing is

still in progress . . . If he cannot read the instructions the writing is not going to be accurate, so it's not really measuring" the student's progression.

Professional development for Writing is as complex as teaching Writing because of its relationship with Reading. So if it is so challenging and the teachers feel that there has not been enough professional development specific to Writing, how do the teachers know how to teach Writing with their ELL?

How Did You Learn to Teach Writing?

The teachers made a strong case about the connection between Reading and Writing and their desire for more focused professional development for Writing. I then began to wonder, they want more training, but how did the teachers even learn to teach Writing since they are already teaching it? So, I asked them how they learned to teach Writing and most of the teachers provided responses that confirmed their belief of the Reading and Writing relationship. Others said they taught Writing based on their own experiences as students, and for others they replied that it was simply intuitive.

Leo described that his extensive professional development in Literacy has allowed him to use the skills he learned about Literacy in the area of Writing.

I've been using in my Writing lessons most of the things that I've been learning from Literacy. And as I said before, they are complementary skills. I mean when you teach Reading, you can't teach Reading if you don't do it right. Because one supports the other.

Samantha and Troy, as high school teachers, reflected on their own experiences as students and how they learned. Troy modestly said,

I am a good writer! Honestly, I am a good writer. . . . I think a lot of that came out of high school and when for two years in history classes, my AP history classes, . . . every single one of our tests was 25 multiple choice, three essays, and in an 85 minute block . . . and we would do things like timed writings or short papers several times a week.

Furthermore, Troy shared that he used some of the same strategies with his own students that his teachers used with him. For example, with constructed responses, he started with modeling and using a topic to which students can relate so they learn about the process of constructing the response. ESL teachers must teach content and language objectives so they balance the two based on the skills and knowledge that the students have to gain.

Samantha, another self-admitted ‘good writer’ shared, “I think I must have learned it when I was a kid. I don’t know. I hate to say that but—I’ve always been a good writer.” She cited modeling as an instructional strategy to help students develop their writing skills, and she also believed that teachers developing relationships with students and relationships among students are important.

I think that’s very, very important to make it fun and make them realize that it can be fun. It’s okay to make those mistakes, and it’s okay that you don’t know how to do this. And you’re going to learn how to do it, and it’s going to be fun. And some teachers don’t realize that you have to relate to the student. You have to find a way to make a connection and make them want to do it. You can’t just be like, ‘Here’s a pen, and now write.’ My kids get very excited, especially, when we’re doing posters or group work or talking and sharing. I mean they all have fun. And they develop relationships with each other, they become . . . a cohort in that they start to hang out with each other, eat with each other and they really do click together after they do group activities in the classroom because of sharing about themselves.

Audrey reflected on how people learn a language even it is the person's first language. First, "listening and speaking and then eventually reading and writing when we were younger, all rolled together." When it comes to teaching, Audrey continues by saying,

It just all sort of comes with being an ESL teacher; I think you have to do all four. . . . I think if you were to leave that out, you would be doing a huge disservice. If I just taught speaking and didn't do that. If I just taught listening and didn't do that. Or take out any of those and do the other three. It would be a huge, huge disservice to the language acquisition.

Since there is a strong relationship between Reading and Writing, the teachers had reached the consensus that Writing needed to be integrated in all content areas and a component of Writing included in each lesson so that students continued the language acquisition process. So, why teach Writing? It is far more than just for testing purposes.

Why and How to Teach Writing

There are two reasons to teach Writing, according to the ESL teachers. First, Sally described that writing is a way of communication. Once she looked at Writing from this perspective, she reflected on how the change impacted the experiences with her elementary students.

The children don't see Writing as homework. They don't see Writing as something they have to do in the class. But once you present to them that Writing is as important as speaking. You are trying to communicate a message, and that message has to get somewhere, that makes a difference.

Because Writing is a way to communicate with others, Sally's students wrote letters to their grade level teachers and mailed them through the U.S. Mail. They asked their teachers to reply and some did. Through this lesson, Sally taught her students how

Writing is a way to communicate with others and a way to get information from others. She demonstrated to her students “that there is a purpose for communication.” She changed her perspective from thinking that writing stayed in the classroom to sharing that “the importance of the children really realizing” that the written work “is actually going somewhere or your poster is going to be used in the class or in the school for student council or to collect pencils” gives purpose to the writing assignments beyond writing for an assignment or assessment purposes.

Secondly, Samantha spoke about how Writing is important so students are successful in all of their classes.

It’s not really writing for a test. . . . I don’t think I’m benefiting my kids by teaching them how to pass the test. What I do is, I go to their teachers, depending on who I have in my classroom . . . and I try to structure my whole class, my plans, to help them in their other classrooms.

She continued:

I think it’s really, really, really important for the kids to be able to explain step by step how they got their [math] answer because it helps them to remember if they can explain it. So that’s how I incorporated Writing in Math. And it really did help them remember the step by step by step things that they had to do. And I tell them, ‘You need to write it as if you’re teaching me, I want you to teach me first step, I need you to and don’t assume that I know what I’m doing. Break it all down.’ And it also helps them with making less mistakes because they were going step by step by step.’ . . . And then in Social Studies, same thing. They have to write short answer questions. So like I said before, I just teach them how to take the question, turn it into an answer because that’s really hard for them to do.

To assist with students’ successes in all subjects, integrating Writing in all subjects is a focus for all of the ESL teachers. Troy described how he used non-fiction text and

Writing in his Algebra class. He posed the question “Why is it important to learn algebra?” because he was using a non-fiction reading selection supporting cross curricular work. By modeling and providing examples, Troy facilitated the conversation for his students to come to a collective answer that Algebra is important to learn and why. Then the students began their individual writing by using the framework to help them develop their written responses. Troy explained that the framework included fill-in the blanks and providing students a stem “so that way they can get to the point where they could create that on their own.”

While describing how and why the ESL teachers teach Writing, they named numerous instructional strategies that they use. These instructional strategies touch on each component of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) in which they are all trained.

Instructional Strategies Used in Lesson Planning and Delivery

As teachers discussed how they each taught Writing and reflected on their practices, I categorized the strategies based on the eight SIOP components. In Appendix E, descriptions of each component and the different strategies that the teachers stated they used are summarized in the tables. In Chapter II, I described the theoretical framework for SIOP and provided a description of the components. Some of the instructional strategies can be in multiple SIOP components. Additionally, the framework is not meant to be sequential. In fact, some teachers will assess students to determine where the language and content gaps are before they develop their lessons and engage students in activities and have them practice. Therefore, the tables in Appendix E are included to

categorize the strategies that teachers talked about in their interviews and are included based on the context in which they described how they used the strategies. The SIOP Component description is based on the work of Echevarria et al. (2008).

This information demonstrated that teachers effectively use the SIOP framework to design and deliver their lessons. Additionally, the exclusion of some categories of evidence does not imply that these teachers do not use them. It simply means that, during our conversations, they did not explicitly name or describe them. For example, appropriate wait time for students to respond to questions and complete tasks and speaking more slowly are two effective characteristics of SIOP. None of the teachers named these strategies, but it was implied. Now that the teachers have used these various strategies and have ensured that all the SIOP components are addressed in their lessons, teachers need to know if the strategies they are using are effective. Next, the teachers described how they know the strategies they used impacted student learning.

Evidence of Effective Instructional Strategies

There are the obvious academic outcomes when students' progress in the writing process, but the teachers also identified the development of personal and group skills among their students. The instructional strategies that the teachers used to teach Writing and to integrate Writing in content areas were deemed effective when teachers collected or observed evidence of student growth. This included increased motivation, engagement, confidence, socializing, participation, sharing, assessment scores, completed work, and improvement in detailed responses.

Personal skills. Increased personal skills are seen by the teachers as students progress in the language acquisition process. Troy reflected on how students frequently doubt their abilities. Positive reinforcement was necessary for students and a teacher simply saying, “You’re exactly right. You are right. You are smart!” provided students support. Over time, the students’ confidence levels increase. Troy explained, “You try and wean them off of that. ‘You know what to do, have some confidence. It’s okay to get one wrong every once in a while.’”

Audrey also experienced that her students were more talkative with peers in their ESL classes than in content or grade level classes. With a laugh, Audrey said

We don’t have a problem at our school with the speaking because these kids talk a lot. They talk probably more in their ESL class. They clam up in their regular classes. But when they come to ESL they are very free.

Audrey referred to the Writing component of language acquisition which is related to the Writing, and a safe environment that fosters such interactions. As relationships developed among students and with the teachers, students’ confidence increased. Additionally, the schools in the study are part of a feeder pattern. After elementary school, the students all go to the same middle school and then the same high school. Many of the students were together for classes, including ESL classes, for multiple years.

While waiting for the teachers to arrive at the high school for our first group interview, the middle school teachers saw many of their former students. They were greeted with hugs and smiles each asking how the other was doing. Both Leo and Audrey asked the students how they were doing in high school, and each student was

eager to share with them about their classes and grades. The relationships with teachers were important for students' development with their personal skills. The relationships foster more personal confidence and safe environments in which to learn and make mistakes.

Group skills. As students' self-confidence increased, they developed relationships with other students. Samantha observed that "they start to hang out with each other and eat with each other and they really do click together after they do group activities in the classroom because of sharing about themselves as well." Although many of the students have attended school together throughout the years, group activities allowed students get to know one another. Many of the instructional strategies the ESL teachers used incorporate collaborative work, so students have multiple opportunities to work with one another.

Academic skills. Another way to determine the effectiveness of the instructional strategies is with the increase of academic skills that are demonstrated with being at or above proficiency levels on state and local assessments, increased literacy skills reflected in writing artifacts, and the ability to better understand content information as demonstrated by work samples.

Samantha said that having students pass their assessments is one way to determine if the instructional strategies used were effective. Based on her students' performances, Samantha said she did make an impact on her students' learning.

They did do better, and they have very high benchmark scores. A lot of them passed their EOCs, and I think it was a couple of reasons why. I mean it wasn't just because I taught them how to write out the answers [to math problems]. It

was because they got twice the amount of practice than the American kids did. And they got the smaller groups and the tutoring that they really needed, vocabulary and stuff.

During the additional class time, she utilized a variety of instructional strategies to either front load information or reinforce information presented in their content classes.

Providing multiple opportunities for students to hear the information provided students time to gain a better understanding of the new information and how to apply the information. Although Troy's comments about knowing if his instructional strategies are working had a touch of humor, he was being serious.

They stop asking me [questions]. I can see it. I guess empirically in a quiz or a test or something like that, but I see it a lot as those things are no longer the obstacle. If reading that word problem is no longer the biggest obstacle, now you can actually focus on the math skill itself.

Sally also talked about students' confidence and how she saw the outcomes of that confidence. She witnessed increased levels of student engagement in activities and increased levels of motivation. These increases coincided with improvements she saw in their writing.

They were able to communicate, to express an idea and that was hard for them especially when it is the second language. They would write something but they wouldn't realize that it didn't make sense. Now, even if it's a short paragraph . . . it expresses what they really want to say not what they think they have to say . . . they are clear, you can read and understand what their message is.

Teachers witnessed the development of students in the area of Writing not only through formal assessments, but also in the way that students interact with one another and

engage in instruction. As teachers continued to improve their practice and learn about different instructional strategies to use in their classrooms, professional development was an important component for their continued professional learning.

Professional Development (PD) Experiences

The professional development experiences of the ESL teachers were varied based on their backgrounds, how long they have been teaching, and what subjects they have taught. All of the ESL teachers participated in professional development offered by the ESL Department, other district departments, and their schools. Although they have not all participated in professional development for Writing, they have all had the opportunity to be part of Literacy professional development. Even Troy, a high school first year teacher, participated in multiple professional development opportunities; therefore, they were all able to describe desired characteristics of professional development and offer ideas for new professional development specific to Writing.

Professional Development Opportunities: Offered by the ESL Department, Other Departments, and Schools

ESL teachers had multiple opportunities to participate in professional development. They described professional development offered not only by the ESL Department but also other departments and their individual schools. They reported participating in the following sessions offered by the ESL Department in the past three years:

- Academic Language for Literacy Development
- Book Study: Why do ELL Struggle with Reading?
- Common Core – Lesson Planning

- Digital Story Telling
- Integrating the Language of Math
- iPad: Integrating Technology and Writing
- Lead Teachers- Supporting classroom teachers
- Literacy Centers
- Shadowing Opportunities for ESL Teachers
- SIOP- Instructional Strategies
- Summer Institute – “Classroom Instruction that Works for ELLs” and Center for Applied Linguistics session
- The Writing Process

In addition to the ESL Department, other departments offered support to teachers.

All first year teachers in the district participate in a yearlong series of professional development to provide support during the pivotal first year of teaching. As a first year teacher, Troy described his experiences,

I don't want to bash, I don't, but I was at a first year teacher development just the other day, and I walked out of there with nothing. . . . Because I already knew everything. . . . pretty much everything they talked about was something I had come across, whether or not it was something I used, it was something that I'd come across in some way, shape or form, . . . it was all things that we'd done in my licensure and Math and education classes.

Troy may not be a typical first year teacher in that he did not find the initial teacher professional development to be terribly helpful. He did speak of Samantha as a great resource because she had been teaching longer than he. She served as a type of professional development for him throughout the year. Samantha became an ESL teacher

through an alternative licensure program offered by the school system and reflected on a specific training in which she participated.

[T]hey would teach us certain things like think, pair, share, . . . round robin. . . . We'd get up, we'd do it, we had to write a lesson plan using it that week. Then the next week we have to reflect: how did it work? What did we do? Would we do it again? What would we change? It was just a great way . . . I think that this was very effective in what I did in the classroom. I found that I used all those activities and they worked.

Samantha's experiences with her on-going training for licensure offered her hands-on activities that met her needs as a new teacher and also engaged her students. She described components of the professional development that are important to her because the information she learned in the professional development could be used immediately in her classroom.

Troy had a similar experience after one of his new teacher sessions. He said that after hearing a veteran teacher talk about his experiences, the teachers gathered in subject-like groups and engaged in conversations. Troy taught Sheltered Instruction Math and English classes, and he joined the Math group since there were no other first year ESL teachers. "[J]ust sharing practices, sharing strategies, things that you have done . . . I thought was pretty useful." Again opportunities to talk with peers about instructional experiences remained important to teachers.

Participants referenced professional development offered at their schools. Both Audrey and Leo worked at Language Middle School, and they each referred to their Literacy coach who provided them and their colleagues with whole group professional development a couple times a month and also individual feedback and coaching. She

provided teachers with literacy strategies to try with students such as “writing off in the margins, having to put symbols down for things maybe they didn’t understand or things they want to emphasize. Just things like that they can do while they’re doing their literacy, while they are doing their reading.” Audrey continued,

Well that’s fine for kids that can read, but we have got some kids that can’t read and that really, really struggle with reading. . . . So I think that she does give us a lot of good strategies. I think sometimes they have to be altered for ESL kids, but at least it is a good strategy—it’s a strategy. And there’s dialogue with us, so that’s good. And she does have games and things you can get in her office to help the kids put sentences together . . . it’s working.

The Literacy coach provided Audrey with suggestions for next steps with a writing assignment that she already completed with her students. During a meeting, Audrey pulled out the student created posters that demonstrated the students’ knowledge of text features. The Literacy coach reviewed the students’ work and provided positive feedback to Audrey. They then collaboratively came up with a plan for students to revisit their work and complete the remaining text features. Audrey and the coach made plans to review the students’ work again once the remaining features were complete. The school’s Literacy coach provided additional support to ESL teachers that enhanced their practice.

Within three years, these five teachers have participated in numerous professional development opportunities. Most of their professional development was not about Writing specifically. There was likely a Writing component to it, but only a couple teachers completed Writing professional development.

Professional Development for Writing

Three teachers referenced professional development sessions specific to Writing; however, these opportunities were not offered by the ESL Department. Audrey reflected on one of her ESL certification courses called “Putting it all Together.” Audrey said that she “has always taught Writing as part of everything else. It’s at least been integrated within the lesson.” The course taught her that writing cannot be presented to students in isolation; therefore, there should be a writing component to each lesson.

Whether it is a poster, or whether it be a letter, or comprehension questions, whatever it is, there always has to be a writing component. . . . you need to do this all and if you leave out one component it’s cheating the student and that isn’t fair. So you can’t be lax on the Writing or lax on the Reading. . . . Putting it all together, that was what it was all about, the culmination. And I think even when you took a foreign language, it was always taught in tandem. They would start reading, writing, listening, and speaking together. And certainly—that’s how we learned to speak, listening and speaking and then eventually reading and writing when we were younger.

Leo’s experiences with Writing professional development were completed when he taught in a different school district and included interactive writing and Writer’s Workshop. At his previous school, Leo described that the school’s Literacy coach went into classrooms and taught.

She would model a lot of interactive writing lessons for the classroom teachers, and I would observe her as well. Now that’s probably the difference between working in elementary and middle. When you go to the higher grades, especially—and even in elementary, but elementary it was focusing on the lower grades but as soon as you start getting into the upper grades, the focus and the pressure is on Reading. So that probably explains the reason why I have given personal focus on taking writing trainings if I don’t have any Reading training.

Interactive writing had the teacher model for students so that after students observe their teachers, students are then able to practice and accomplish what the teacher demonstrated. Leo described the same type of support for Writer's Workshop. A coach would model lessons and then provide feedback to the teachers as they taught the Writer's Workshop sessions.

Many professional development opportunities added to a teacher's knowledge base and skills that he/she possessed and can use in classrooms for teaching Writing. The various professional development, whether provided by the ESL Department or not, complemented previous professional development that teachers experienced to enhance their teaching.

Desired Characteristics of ESL Professional Development (PD)

As the teachers talked about their experiences, they described what they liked and did not like with professional development offered by the ESL Department. I categorized the teachers' responses that were provided during the teachers' individual interviews and group sessions into four themes:

- Focused presentation of new ideas
- Hands-on activities that promoted cooperative learning and allocated time for discussion of new information, exploration of ideas, and sharing ideas and thoughts among teachers
- Time allotted for teachers to develop lessons incorporating the new knowledge and skills which could be immediately implemented in classrooms

- Opportunities for teachers to try new strategies in the classroom and then reflect and debrief with either the presenter or peers

Next, each of these themes is explored from the teachers' perspectives.

Focused Presentation of New Ideas

Each of the teachers expressed that sitting through professional development that included information that they already knew was un-motivating and did not help their classroom instruction. Teachers prefer new information to be presented from a different angle and additional ways that teachers can incorporate the new knowledge or skills in lessons. Audrey described an example of how two ESL presenters presented information from a new perspective in a recent professional development which was instrumental to a change in her thinking and approach to teaching.

I just found them very, very interesting. I think both . . . seem to really delve into stuff that I had never thought about. It's new, it's refreshing, and I really have to say I have enjoyed their presentations. They have new angles of getting it, a different way of looking at things, and also presenting things differently. . . . I just finished [a professional development session] . . . and one of the topics was you need to be concerned about the way that the student gets [to the end product]. . . . We just look at the product and say it is an A or a B, but maybe you really need to look at the process. How did they get to this? And if the students follow a process, and we give them the rubric to follow they're going to come up with a good product because you can go back and edit, you can go back and change, you can go back and say 'Step 5, let's work on that,' 'Step 8, you almost got it, but let's refine that.' . . . Plus, when students learn to do a process with things, whether it is an essay writing or a poster, it helps them have a rubric for future things, which I think is really good.

Audrey changed her approach to teaching Writing based on the experiences with the professional development and gave on-going specific feedback to her students about their

writing process that they followed so that students could learn the framework and be able to complete the process again.

Hands-on Activities and Time for Discussion, Exploration, and Sharing

All five teachers made several references to having hands-on activities and multiple opportunities to discuss the information being presented with one another during the session allowing them to process information and opportunities to ask the presenter questions. During professional development, hands-on activities provided participants opportunities to be more engaged in the presentation and apply and practice what was being presented.

The ESL Department offered a Summer Institute which lasted for multiple days. Leo reflected on the presenter who used movement and activities during the session to engage participants. Participants experienced the instructional strategies that they could also use in their classrooms with their students.

Mostly, it's like you keep the blood flowing, you get out of your seat. If you are sitting for a long time you get to a point that you plateau, you tune out . . . Chances are that you're going to remember more— it's going to stick in your mind easier, and it's going to last instead of being seated and a passive type of audience. That's the advantage of walking around and having people walk around.

Leo referred to two activities he experienced during the ESL Summer Institute.

Participants moved around and experienced the activities just as students would. Instead of having to answer questions on a sheet of paper, corners of the room were used to represent a possible answer. Leo described, "So if you feel like your response is closer to [answer choice] A, you're going to have to move to this spot." Participants moved to the

designated places in the room that represented their answers. This allowed participants to stand, move around the room, and interact with others. The other activity included moving as well. Two circles were made with one inside the other. The people in one circle walked clockwise while the people in the other circle walked counterclockwise. As people were walking,

you play some music, then you stop the music you ask [the person] a question to the person right across from him or her. It's pretty good because that gives you the option or chance to talk to people that you very seldom talk to when you are in the staff development or in the classroom.

These activities encouraged discussion between people based on the questions posed and provide opportunities for people to move around and experience the learning. During the professional development teachers talked about how they could use the strategies during their lessons. Samantha shared that a benefit of small groups and discussions during professional development was that teachers “could have stolen ideas from other people telling how they would use it and then we could build on that.” Most educators are willing to share ideas and their lessons learned from trying new activities, so opportunities to share and discuss remained important for teachers.

Samantha reflected on an ESL PD that she was asked to lead specific to the writing process that explored instructional strategies that teachers can use in their classrooms to facilitate the writing process for the five paragraph essay. She explained that she approached the professional development with the teachers being the students taking part in all of the activities.

We showed them how to get the kids out of their seats. . . . And we used a graphic organizer and labeling. There was a big poster [to model] and then everybody had to make their own poster. We did a scavenger hunt where they had to find the definition of each word. And then we would use examples. I made an essay and they'd have to stick the parts of the essay in the right spot on the graphic organizer, and then you have to create your own. They would be asked 'How do you make a thesis statement, how do you add supporting information?'—and just broke it down that way.

By including hands-on activities, students or professional development participants, are engaged and experiencing the learning.

Samantha also spoke about the preference to participate in PD in like groups such as grade spans because teachers are likely experiencing the same challenges with students.

Meeting with all of the high school teachers was beneficial in so many ways because we were able to collaborate with other people, we were able to talk to them about what would you do if you had a student that was like this and you could change your teaching approach. When we met as high school teachers for professional development, there were times when one high school teacher said, 'Okay, I think I'm really comfortable teaching Reading in the classroom . . . and how to modify assignments . . . and differentiate.'

By offering times for like groups to collaborate and have discussions, teachers shared specific strategies to meet struggling students' needs especially when teachers are adjusting their teaching. Professional development that incorporated hands-on activities and times for participants to talk with one another were important characteristics for professional development for the ESL teachers.

Troy summarized,

We go to these professional developments, I feel like we are there—we're there to learn, yes, but we're not necessarily there to be at our desks, taking notes because there's a test at the end. Professional developments work best when you are sharing ideas. . . . [The presenter] should have something to present but the idea is that we can treat it almost like a PLC at the same time that it is a PD. . . . [The presenter] gives you the information you need, and then you can share.

When teachers are provided opportunities to be engaged in professional development they are fully engaged in the learning process which allows them to discuss and process the new information with their peers. The teachers were adamant that these characteristics be included to ensure that the professional development is meaningful.

Time to Develop Lessons Incorporating New Knowledge and Skills for Immediate Use

Teachers appreciated the professional development when it incorporated strategies that they could immediately use in their classrooms. Sally reflected on her iPad professional development and how she explored and used different apps in the professional development sessions, talked with the presenter who was an elementary school teacher as well, and planned to use the apps in her classroom.

I teach K through 5, so the iPad gives me a good—an excellent tool because I can find a variety of things to do. . . . I immediately use the iPad [app] in centers to refresh their memories. [After the professional development session], we can immediately go back to the classroom and apply.

Audrey provided another example of how what she learned in professional development provided her with ideas as to how to use the same activity within her own classroom to address language and content objectives.

[H]e gave us three quotes on a piece of paper. And we had to do a little activity. Which one was Mother Teresa, which one was Lincoln, which one was the third. We had to really look at the words and really think. ‘Well, this sounds like Mother Teresa; no, this one does, this one mentions God so that’s got to be Mother Teresa.’ And really the one that mentioned God was actually Lincoln. I thought it was very interesting, and very interesting to see how the students (we) picked it apart and had a discussion about it. It was a very simple activity, and you can probably even do that with kids, ‘Who said this? Why do you think they said that?’ . . . Well you could do it with a hero character—‘Which hero said this? And why do you think that?’ I don’t know that I would purposely try to trick them—like they tried to trick us—because they don’t have the cultural background that we do, that I do. But I wouldn’t really want to trick them, but I would want to give them a quote that’s maybe sort of embedded and they would have to really, really look at the words and the punctuation and look at the whole thing and say now which one of these characters would be liable to say this? So I think on a lot of levels the ground, the language, the punctuation, and who said it would be of interest to the kids.

Sometimes the professional development in which the teachers were part of specifically focused on developing lessons plans and in a more systematic way than what Sally and Audrey described. During the 2012-13 school year, teachers began teaching the standards included in the Common Core. Since the 2012-13 school year was the first year of implementation, one could say that all teachers were first year teachers. Excellence School District provided teachers with multiple opportunities to meet during the summer with teams of teachers to develop lesson plans for the first quarter. ESL teachers developed lesson plans that included both content goals and language goals. Samantha participated in the lesson planning sessions, and shared,

We had a break out session where we had 20 minutes to go write a lesson plan using this format. . . . I liked how they did give us a chance to write the lesson plan using the actual template. . . . I was able to talk to other people about how they would use it and what they would do. There are a lot of questions on that template; it gave me an opportunity to say ‘I don’t know what that is, what does it mean?’ And even though the person I was working with said, ‘I don’t know’, it

didn't matter because it gave us a chance to both look up what it meant and we found out what it meant. It does give me a spot where I can actually say, 'Okay, how am I teaching Common Core goals that are part of each subject while I'm also working on WIDA goals.' I think it gave me [the opportunity to develop] an appropriate 'I can statement' to put out for the students so they could see what they were learning also. And I also was able to take those I can statements and teach them what they meant because most of the time I can cite specific textual evidence.

When provided time to plan how new information and skills will be incorporated into future lessons, teachers were able to benefit from the ideas of others and also be intentional about the use of instructional strategies.

Time to Try New Strategies in the Classroom, Reflect, and Debrief

Once the teachers were exposed to the new information or new instructional strategies and they had the opportunity to discuss and plan, the teachers then desired the opportunity to try the strategy themselves, reflect, and come back together to share their experiences with the peers in the professional development session.

At some point during all of the interviews, each of the five teachers talked about wanting to try what they learned in professional development in their own classrooms. After implementing the strategies in their classroom, they wanted to reflect on their experiences and debrief with peers and/or the presenter for feedback.

Samantha gave a specific example of how this was incorporated in an ESL professional development that she led. Homework was assigned after each session; participants tried the strategy they learned in their own classrooms.

I did one of the graphic organizers, and I color coded it and I made it so each section of the essay was a different color and I put all the definitions on there. And I said to everybody, go and see how this works for you, see if you can tweak

it or if it works or if the kids like it and everybody came back with different ideas, and it was really interesting to see how they—and they used it in the classroom. Now they'd try it and I had some much positive feedback on the things that we did and people were excited because they were trying it, and coming back, and talking about it and showing it.

The opportunities for teachers to come together and talk about how implementation went allowed for continued collaboration among teachers and enhancement of their lesson development and delivery.

Changes to Professional Development Offerings—Content and Times

Three years ago, the professional development design changed for the ESL Department. The teachers compared the professional development over the years and provided insight to how they were able to provide input regarding the PD offerings. They felt that their input was valued because the ESL Department offered sessions that focused on topics they needed and suggested.

Both Leo and Sally spoke about how there was a meeting at the beginning of the year for all of the ESL staff to include interpreters and teachers. Teachers saw one another after the summer vacation, and the Director of ESL presented the priorities for the upcoming year. Teachers attended breakout sessions organized by grades - elementary, middle, and high school.

Throughout the year, there were bimonthly professional development sessions when teachers met, once again, in their grade spans for district led professional development. Teachers traveled to a high school in the district and met in different classrooms in the school. The focus was Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP), and its components which were modeled by the presenters.

Although there were changes to the monthly PD, the beginning of the year meeting remained unchanged providing teachers the opportunity to reconnect after summer vacation, to hear about changes and updates from the Director, and participated in sessions specific to grade levels and/or subjects like Common Core and Essential Standards and Data.

A Summer Institute was offered at the end of the school year where nationally known speakers and presenters worked with teachers. Speakers included Jane Hill, the author of *Classroom Instructional that Works for ELLs*, and Louis Mangione, consultant and professional development presenter on topics such as *Powerful Instruction for World Language and ELL Classrooms*. In addition to the opportunity to heard from national speakers, Leo explained that “the idea was to basically have teachers get most of the staff development in two or three days so that that would save some time during the year and they wouldn’t have to go after school” as frequently. Additionally, he said,

One of the most significant changes has to do with the ESL Summer Institute, which was not an option in Excellence County Schools some years ago. In addition to learning and collaborating form colleagues, the institute in the summer is a great opportunity for ESL teachers to learn from experienced and nationally-recognized presenters.

All of the teachers said that they felt their input was considered in the development of the professional development sessions. They all completed the annual survey, mid-year reflection, which is sent by the Director of ESL. Sally described the process,

She started sending a survey about, what did you like about the professional development this year? . . . What do we want the following year that we didn't have or that we had and we would like to have again? So that's how we do it; really, right now it's all our choice. . . . I feel that now, the ESL PD are more aligned to teachers' needs and concerns.

Leo said that:

Like most of the things that I have answered in my survey, when they request input for future professional development, I see most of it reflected on offerings and schedules. The same applies to some of my colleagues. . . . data, many people wanted that, and that was part in the last opening meeting for the school year, for this school year, we had some sessions. . . . The ESL Department is so supportive. I used to work in another county which is bigger, and well, we had the monthly meetings and all that, but then you were just left on your own.

Sally explained that the monthly professional development changed in both frequency and offered choices rather being assigned professional development for the teachers. The afterschool sessions used to be twice a month and the topics were the same for all teachers in the grade spans. Now, teachers attend afterschool professional development only six to eight times a year and teachers select the area of professional development that interested them. Sally felt the changes were positive, and explained how she selected her professional development.

I think that it's made a big difference for better since we are able to do what we want to do. Each one of us can choose according to our needs, our likes, or where we feel comfortable. So I think that made a big difference because that increases participation, if you are attending something that you want to do, it is better. In general I think it is all positive about that difference. They have always been interesting but I do think that makes a big difference. . . . In the past I've always tried to choose professional development that I—well this is funny, that I—like my strengths instead of my weaknesses. . . . I always choose to go—anything that I feel that I can apply directly to my students.

Just as Sally spoke about the changes to the professional development form and some content, Leo commented on the content changes as well. He noticed a change with an emphasis on integration of instructional technology and the use of student data. “I think this is probably because of teachers’ demands and needs, emphasis on data. There have been some sessions in data too, like data analysis for tracking students—monitoring students’ progress.”

In addition to completing the annual survey, all teachers completed evaluations after each professional development session. Audrey described,

She always asks for feedback at the end of a session . . . and you can write your own opinions. So obviously she’s following through with reading what people have to say and taking that into consideration. . . . There’s a rating, did you take this information back to the classroom? Did you use it? Did you use it at all or did you use it a lot? . . . So it is kind of a sort of reflection as well as a rating of it. And obviously I think they use that feedback to make things interesting and more inclusive.

Lead teachers from central office were assigned to each school providing instructional support. Leo stated the lead teachers also shared with the Director areas of possible professional development based on their conversations and observations with teachers.

When you meet with your lead teacher, you just start talking about a lot of things. If you have a high need or if you are interested in or you think that something should be included in one of the staff developments you basically pose your opinion right there. So there are a lot of opportunities to express what your professional development needs are, and if you are like—if you want to voice it yourself you can do that as well.

There were multiple ways for teachers to share their professional development needs, and the ESL Department honored them by including many of them in the semester offerings for all teachers. The ESL professional development was differentiated to better meeting individual teacher needs.

Designing a New Professional Development Course for ESL Teachers for Writing

After much discussion surrounding the professional development in which they participated during individual and group sessions, I used a scenario to prompt individual reflection and to generate ideas for a new professional development.

You have been asked to design a new professional development specifically about Writing for ESL students. Describe everything from the target audience; where and when the PD would be offered; who would present/ facilitate the PD; how long will the sessions be; what topics would be covered; and what data would be used to determine effectiveness.

There were more commonalities among responses than differences, and what they described was consistent with the desired characteristics of PD previously explained and incorporated characteristics identified as lacking from PD in which they participated or thought there should be more development.

The teachers' descriptions were also supported with research, specifically Birman et al. (2000), Desimone (2009), and the instructional framework of Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) developed by Echevarria et al. (2006). Both the structural components and core features of professional development were addressed in the professional development that the teachers brainstormed. The teachers also included components of the SIOP framework which teachers use for lesson delivery. This

demonstrates that the teachers have internalized SIOP; they automatically plan with the framework in mind. It is through modeling, active learning, and interactions during the professional development that SIOP components are infused into the professional development opportunity.

Next are the collective responses to the scenario presented to the ESL teachers.

Target Audience

Four of the five teachers agreed that ESL and content/grade level teachers should participate in their professional development because ESL teachers are not the only ones that teach ELL. Troy explained,

I would like to have not just ESL [teachers], but content teachers, because they're the ones who . . . are more familiar with the [content] standards that need to be addressed. Not that we're not familiar, but we work from our WIDA [language] standards.

Sally provided another rationale for the inclusion of content or grade level teachers in the Writing professional development focusing on English Language Learners.

So the content teachers need to remember that they do need different strategies. They take more time; it's going to be harder for them to understand everything. I know they know it, like we all do, but it's hard to keep it up, to remember when you have diversity within the classroom, so just with modifications. For example, I know they are willing to do it. . . . With ESL students what you really want is to get them to write, to put their ideas down, . . . It is a different process definitely. So I think it would be nice for them to have that reflection experience.

There was overwhelming interest by the ESL teachers to include their content and grade level peers in their professional development. They acknowledged that the content teachers are the experts with content knowledge, and they are the experts with language

goals. By partnering, they will be able to provide comprehensive instruction to their students, specifically in the area of Writing.

Presenter/Facilitator

None of the teachers identified a specific person they thought should provide the professional development. Instead they described a presenter to be someone who was an expert in Literacy and Writing. Ideally, they want someone who had an ESL background. Sally said that teaching ELL is:

different, you need to get in the ESL students' brains to understand and know [how an ESL student thinks.]. I am a second language learner, so I know how it is to this day. I've been learning English all my life because I grew up going to a bilingual school. And I still have to think before even saying something sometimes. . . . If that person specializes in Writing for ESL students, yes, [he or she should lead it].

Both Audrey and Samantha said that their professional development would include teachers to facilitate their professional development. Audrey described the presenter to be one “who is very good at teaching Writing and an ESL teacher who enjoys writing and has had some good background in the craft of writing.” No matter the presenter, each of the teachers included access to the presenter for feedback in between sessions. Leo described the interaction between the participant and the experienced teacher/presenter.

If they were able to see how you teach [a concept or objective] with an experienced teacher modeling the lesson in a classroom and having the chance to go and see well, how is he teaching. For example, today he's going to be teaching writing a paragraph. So how he or she does that? And then having the chance after that to meet with the teacher and debrief and just go through a discussion about what the different things that he or she did in the classroom. But mostly with the modeling and observing.

Location for the Professional Development

Leo was the only one who commented specifically about the location. He described that being in a real classroom setting was more powerful than the presenter coming to talk to teachers without seeing the authentic experiences between teacher and students.

Regardless of the level whether we refer to elementary, . . . going to the classroom, and observing and then meeting and then reflecting, and debriefing so I would go into my own classroom and doing the same. And it really worked. I think it's much more powerful than just having someone coming to you and showing you. Even though it can be very dynamic with the staff developer coming to a classroom and showing me and even though he makes it the most dynamic presentation it's not going to be as powerful as going to a classroom and observing a real classroom with real children in a real scenario.

Leo believed that this type of professional development experience has a lasting effect on teachers because he participated in professional development like this and it impacted his practice. Important components of professional development include opportunities to observe, debrief with the teacher, practice what was observed in his/her own classroom, and then follow-up with the presenter/teacher to discuss how his/her own lesson went.

Topics and Duration of Professional Development

The only agreement about the timeframe for the professional development among the teachers was with more than one session and on-going. A few of them described a semester or a full year. Teachers took more time to talk about the topics that they would address in the professional development. "The Writing Process" or "The Evolution of Writing Process" described the teachers' descriptions. Teachers described professional development sessions that would address appropriate components of Writing based on

elementary, middle and high school Writing goals and differentiated instructional strategies for students to progress in Writing.

Components of Writing for elementary, middle and high school Writing

goals. Leo's professional development addressed how the focus would be differentiated for the grade spans.

For elementary, [the focus] would be more on the early stages, more like interactive writing, just when children start writing. You start by teaching them how to write sentences, and you just start building from there. For middle school . . . it would depend on the student proficiency level. If we are talking about, for example, intermediate student I would probably start teaching how to write a paragraph, a complete paragraph with the topic sentence and the supporting ideas through modeling.

The multiple genres of Writing were discussed, addressed in the professional development, and modified for the different grades. From Troy's high school perspective, he identified formal, informal, creative, and research as genres to focus on. He felt that formal writing which included research and analysis papers needed the most attention when designing professional development to support ELL and Writing. Leo offered the middle school perspective highlighting the importance of reading to generate ideas, the use of graphic organizers in planning the writing, cohesion and grammar, and practicing persuasive essay and argumentative essays. Sally explained that elementary ELL have difficulty with the personal essays and poetry. She expressed the desire to focus on different genres of Writing in each session to include appropriate instructional strategies with each genre.

For ESL students it's hard to put their own ideas, their own message. They think everything is about someone else. You tell them, 'write down what you think about' and they respond with 'I don't know, I can't.' . . . I would definitely include in each session, the genres and strategies.

Common Core was also discussed. Samantha said that her "professional development would also take Common Core into account because we do need to help these kids in their English" content. Leo described that grammar is again a focus because it is included in Common Core standards and so the inclusion of grammar in the professional development is important. Lastly, Sally reflected and said, "One positive thing I see about Common Core is the way things are immediately put into a scenario, into a practical [context], into our daily life experience." Making new information practical and real for students assists students with building background knowledge and making connections for them.

Differentiated instructional strategies for students to progress in Writing.

Although the way in which information would be collected differed, the teachers outlined that participants of the professional development would provide input to the specific instructional strategies. Participants would then identify their areas of expertise to see if someone from within the group were the expert. They would also identify topics in which they all needed support and secure an expert to provide the professional development. The professional development sessions would include hand-on activities either in the role of a student or as teacher to experience the various strategies and to anticipate where students might have difficulties. Dedicated time to discuss what teachers learned and to incorporate this new information and strategies into lessons would

be part of the professional development. Participants would have to complete homework which included trying what they learned and reflected on the implementation. Finally, teachers will return to their group of peers and share how things went, debrief with the presenter and/or connect with peers to review what needs to be modified and what went well.

Samantha's sessions focused on different instructional strategies and incorporated all of the desired PD characteristics identified from teachers and previously described.

Like posters [presented] one session; teaching how I use it in the classroom and then giving them the opportunity to come up with their own ideas and sharing using think/pair/share where they do their own poster and then they present it to the rest of the group. Then the next session might use graphic organizers. All the different graphic organizers you can use for writing and how that helps you. Then the next time I might have them read something, make a timeline, create little sentence strips of the events in the timeline, and then use that to write a summary using the events in the time line. . . . I might even video my kids using it and show that. And then I . . . would give them homework and say, "Hey, I want you to go try this [in] your classroom and give me a reflection when you come back. We will share our reflections the next time, how you used it, how it was effective in your classroom or not effective, or how you would not use it at all.

The teachers suggested some instructional strategies to include in the professional development sessions; it is not an exhaustive list but samples of what students can produce for teachers to measure the effectiveness of the professional development and ultimately students' growth with language development.

- Graphic organizers
- Essays
- Posters
- Drawings and captions

- Creating story books
- Letter writing
- Newspaper and magazine articles
- Brochures
- Short stories
- Different endings to stories
- Poems
- Timelines
- PowerPoint presentations
- Art
- Including technology

Samantha described why she would use student work to assess student growth and not assessments.

These kids are tested to death! In my professional development, I would ask people to bring in student work. . . . Start at the very beginning and use two examples and keep a folder so we could look at one student at the beginning, the middle, and the end and see if their writing did improve. We'd have to create a rubric as a group and decide what we were all looking at for writing so it was consistent in our grading of each student's Writing assessment.

She admitted that if student growth is not observed, the teachers needed to talk about why and what needs to be done to change and "make it so our teaching is more effective."

Sally also described that her professional development would be determined effective if student engagement and motivation increased.

I obviously should see a difference in my students, in everything, even motivation. Not necessarily improvement, but engagement to the activities. Because they don't like writing, this is so hard for them. So if I see a difference in their participation, their engagement, when they are—and they are wanting to write, even if the improvement is not a big one, but your students' attitude towards writing would be a big way to determine if it was effective or not.

Leo expanded on Sally's description of student engagement as a measure of effective professional development.

On engagement, because sometimes kids they are not very keen on writing. Even though they write, they text, and they send e-mails and they Facebook, they do all those things, but some children, not all of them, some children don't find any type of interest in writing.

All of the teachers acknowledged that assessments provide data on the effectiveness of professional development on student achievement, and they also said that data once a year does not provide them with immediate information to impact instruction. Therefore, they monitored their students' work over time to see progress. If progress is not made, they adjusted their instruction and utilized other strategies to assist the students.

This question engaged the teachers to think about their own areas of development and also demonstrated how they internalized best practices and incorporated them in their professional development. Samantha was even inspired, "Gosh, I feel like I should call [the Director] and ask her if I can teach a professional development. I just might do it again."

Summary

Through individual and group interviews, the elementary, middle, and high schools' ESL teachers shared their perspective about their experiences with professional development about Writing, translating what they learned into their classrooms in lessons, and what instructional strategies they use specific to Writing. Three years ago the professional development design expanded to offer teachers choices in their professional development to meet their specific needs. They no longer all met on the same day in the same place; rather they had options to attend year-long or semester long professional development sessions. The different offerings are based on teachers' input and requests and also student achievement data. These changes were well received by ESL teachers because it provided more focused professional development in areas they needed.

The teachers were clear that Writing cannot be separated from Reading in not only our discussions but also in their teachings. They teach Writing not only because it is tested but because they understand the importance of being able to write to communicate with others and to excel in their in their academic classes. It is through writing that the students are able to demonstrate academic language and content knowledge. To teach writing, they use countless instructional strategies that are aligned with the SIOP framework for lesson design and delivery. Using the framework is automatic for the teachers because they have internalized it. They have a full understanding of the components and benefits of following the framework. There is not a "one size fits all" for teaching writing, so the teachers are continuously trying different strategies to ensure

that the students understand the writing process and can demonstrate their understanding with written work.

In the next chapter, I will continue sharing the teacher's perspectives. The final session with the teachers occurred after they received their annual ACCESS data and our conversations focused on the Writing subtest results. I will share their reactions, their surprises, and their perspective about what contributed to their students' successes.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, PART II: TEACHERS' REFLECTION ON DATA, WHAT WORKED, AND WHAT'S NEXT

I met the teachers in the lobby of the high school for our final session together. To me, they seemed happy, jovial, and relieved. With only one mandatory workday remaining, maybe all teachers are like this. But these teachers' emotions were a little different. These teachers talked about being happy with the test results and the growth of their students. The teachers received their 2012–13 ACCESS data just a week prior to our final meeting. As we began our final conversation, their smiles got wider as they gave details about how their classes did on the ACCESS, described the successes, and talked about their plans for next year. In this final session, I did little facilitation because the teachers talked to one another rather than to me as they did during previous meetings. As soon as someone finished talking, another teacher responded. So many times there was laughter, excitement in their voices about a strategy they were going to use next year, and even many talking at once to respond to something someone else said and to share what they were thinking. It was a congenial atmosphere.

Reactions to 2012–13 ACCESS Data

Writing Domain

At least once during our conversation, each teacher stated that he/she was “happy” because of the results and the progress their students demonstrated, including the number of students exited from ESL services. All of the teachers referenced the WIDA

continuum of growth and how students received a score for each of the four domains: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. In our discussion, the Writing domain was the focus, but as with past conversations, Writing could not be isolated from the other domains in our conversations.

There is a progression in language acquisition for each domain as defined by WIDA. Based on a student's responses, each student receives a score in each domain and proficiency level is determined. The levels are like stair steps starting at Level 1 (Entering) and moving upwards: Level 2 (Beginning), Level 3 (Developing), Level 4 (Expanding), Level 5 (Bridging), and finally Level 6 (Reaching).

Sally started our conversation and said that she had already looked at three grade levels of data and so far the results were positive. She started the 2012-13 school year with "bigger numbers in Entering and [those students] moved to Developing and Expanding" in Writing. Although she did not have anyone at Bridging or Reaching, her elementary students moved forward on the continuum.

Audrey shared data for her middle school in terms of federal requirements for growth and also in comparison to other middle schools in the district. Using NCLB requirements, the state measures schools and districts on three different Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO). The North Carolina's Accountability Plan defined each of the three AMAO (NC DPI, 2012b). AMAO 1 stated that Limited English Proficient (LEP) students must show progress by meeting one of the following three conditions regarding the composite score on the ACCESS:

1. improve at least one English language proficiency level, or
2. a .5 increase from the previous score, or
3. reach the state's composite score, 4.8.

Audrey stated that for AMAO 1, the school grew 51%. Half of the students increased at least one level. For example, moving from Beginning to Developing or Expanding to Bridging. Language Middle School was the second highest middle school regarding ELL growth according to Audrey. AMAO 2 required an annual increase in the percentage of students who attain English language proficiency on the ACCESS according the state's criteria to exit services. For North Carolina, students must have a composite of at least 4.8 and score a 4 or greater on both the Reading and Writing subtests. Audrey shared that 15% of the middle school LEP students reached proficiency and this was above the middle school district average of 13%. When students reach proficiency, students exit the ESL program. The first two AMAO are related to language acquisition. AMAO 3 is related to academic proficiency and requires that the LEP subgroup meet proficiency in Reading and Math each year. At the time of this study, the 2012–13 academic state assessment results were not yet available and would not be available until October 2013. Based on the first two AMAO, Language Middle School ELL performed well with language acquisition as a group.

Audrey continued with her analysis with the group. Eighty percent of her sixth and seventh graders “went up in [both] Reading and Writing. And the 20% who didn't go up in both either stayed the same or had a tenth of a point change from the previous year's level.” Audrey speaks specifically to Reading and Writing scores because they are

the domains that are used to determine if a student is proficient and is no longer eligible for services. At the middle school level, students typically usually plateau and Language Middle School experienced this. As Audrey explained her data, the high school teachers chimed in confirming the plateau at the middle school level. They talked about the changes that adolescents experience in middle school and also the idea of as the levels of proficiency increase the growth is usually smaller. Additionally, until recently, there was not as much of a focus on Writing at the middle school. With the implementation of Common Core, Writing has become more of a focus at all grade spans, but especially middle school. As included in Chapter III, the middle school ELL have experienced a plateau just as the teachers described. Despite the overall plateau, many middle school students did experience growth.

Both Samantha and Troy described their high school students as “growing a ton” in the area of Writing. A unique situation with high school schedules was that the students started their English 9 course in January, and they were tested in March based on the state testing window. Troy reflected and said that he would love to see how the students scored now after they had additional months of instruction because he thinks they have grown even more. Troy said he was overall impressed with the student data with the exception of the 12th graders. He shared that about 40% of the ninth to 11th graders were at Level 4 (Expanding) and about 30% of the ninth graders were at Level 5 (Bridging). He summarized, “I’m happy to see them on the upper end of the spectrum.”

Exiting Services

A student exits ESL services and is no longer assessed on the ACCESS and no longer receives accommodations on state tests once he or she meets the state's English language proficiency level. As explained in Chapter III, in North Carolina, students must have an overall composite ACCESS score above 4.8 and scoring at least a 4.0 on both of the Reading and Writing subtests (NC DPI, 2012b). Based on the 2012–13 data from the teachers, 17 middle schools ELL and 18 high schools ELL exited services. Both of the high school teachers gave credit to the middle school teachers because most of the students exiting were freshman. Audrey stated “It makes me happy! Knowing that so many ninth graders exited.” Audrey concluded that having so many students exit at both the middle and high school levels is a great example of “everyone working together, collaborating and working together, sharing kids, and following-up with them.” Some students that were identified eligible for services starting in elementary school had the support of ESL teachers through middle and high school.

Surprises

There were surprises when the teachers began looking at students' data because the assessment is a snapshot of the students' work on the days the assessments were administered. Teachers worked with the students every day of the school year and in some cases for multiple years. As the teachers reflected on scores, Sally talked about her surprise with the data: I “believe our students' Writing levels are better than what the test shows.” She expanded on her thoughts by explaining that with some students' limited understanding of English, students have difficulties simply reading and getting through

the written instructions and scenario. She noticed students' frustration levels increase at the beginning of the test. They are more overwhelmed and nervous, and they had not even started the Writing assessment. All of the teachers agreed that some of their students experienced the same frustrations. Troy was surprised at the amount of growth students experienced in the Writing portion: "I was surprised at how much a couple grew, and how little a couple grew." I think the teachers had realistic expectations for their students and projected how their students would perform on the ACCESS because of the continued work they do with the students.

Overall the teachers were pleased with their students' progress and successes. Although the ACCESS is only a snapshot of student performance, teachers are able to review their test data and reflect on their practice and student outcomes. Despite the fact that ESL teachers identified challenges for students in terms of the Writing assessment, according to the teachers, students continued to make progress in the language acquisition process.

Strategies Implemented Contributing to Successes

After reflecting and sharing their thoughts about their data, we explored what instructional strategies were used and which ones the teachers felt contributed to the success they had just described. Each teacher provided a different strategy, but all teachers offered verbal and non-verbal affirmation of the positive impact of the strategies as they were described by others.

Teacher Reflections about Implemented Strategies

Samantha described that the students received “extra, extra, extra support because they had ESL academic language classes with Troy. And then they had Sheltered Math, Sheltered World History, Sheltered Science, and Sheltered English 9. . . . so they had small groups and two teachers.” These content sheltered classes were comprised only of ELL with two teachers every day. Then the ELL had time with the ESL teacher for the academic language development. Samantha contributed students’ successes to this double dosing which at times front loaded information for the students prior to the content class and also reinforced information after the content class.

Audrey explained, “I think it is good to try different things. . . . There is a lot to tap into with ESL students especially if they have been in ESL from Kindergarten. It’s there.” The teachers provided a resounding “Yes!” in agreement. During this final session, the following strategies were talked about or mentioned and they are included below based on how the strategies follow the SIOP framework and also demonstrates that the teachers actively use the SIOP framework.

SIOP Categories and Implemented Strategies

Some of the instructional strategies the teachers named were mentioned, described, or explained during previous individual sessions and/or group sessions and captured in Appendix E and discussed in Chapter IV. During this final group interview, teachers named additional instructional strategies, and they are included in Table 6 below.

Table 6**Additional Instructional Strategies as Evidenced by the Teachers**

SIOP Component	Evidence as Told by the Teachers
Lesson Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Co-teaching – Sheltered classes – Including writing in each lesson – Using the Language of Math, Social Studies, Science, in every class
Building Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing examples – Reading Selections – Printed a copy of a telegram – Pictures – Videos – Webquests
Comprehensible Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Repetition of concept with a variety of strategies – Using the Language of Math, Social Studies, Science, in every class
Strategies	<p>Cognitive –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Chunking information – Graphic organizers – Note taking – Sequencing – Post-it notes – Identifying patterns and steps to use – Develop framework or checklist to guide independent work – Using scrap paper to write out steps/routines or mnemonics – Mnemonics <p>Metacognitive –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Questioning to find answers <p>Social/affective –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Giving examples and sentence stems – Group discussions – Group/pair work – Small class size

Table 6 (Cont.)

SIOP Component	Evidence as Told by the Teachers
Interactions	– Small class size
Practice/Application	– Constructed responses – Blogs – Short stories to identify part of the story – plot, setting, etc.; to compare and contrast; find supporting evidence to learn content objectives
Lesson Delivery	– Allocating enough time to front load or reinforce new information without overwhelming students.
Review and Assessment	– Peer review and editing – Grading themselves – Constructed responses

Until this session, no one expanded on the importance of building background for ELL. During our final session, there was a lengthy discussion. All of the teachers were adamant that building background was essential for teaching ELL because they lack experiences and information that acts as the foundation for learning.

Troy and Audrey recounted how building background was necessary for students. They had to continuously share information with students prior to and during classes when they read classic pieces of literature like *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. They had to spend time introducing students to the time period and the events surrounding the story. To help with building background knowledge the teachers agreed that that using selections with similar themes allowed content to be taught. Troy also stated that Common Core required “a great deal of background knowledge, and the common assessments prepared by the school district provided confirmation of the increased Writing scores on ACCESS.” The increased rigor for the academic standards positively impacted the language skills for ELL.

Based on the teachers' descriptions of the various instructional strategies they used and plan to use in their lessons, there was ample evidence to confirm that the five teachers' use of the SIOP framework and various instructional strategies are effective based on the 2012-13 data specific to the Writing domain. Since the SIOP framework was consistently used by the ESL teachers for lesson design and delivery, positive student outcomes occur. In the initial section in this chapter, the teachers provided initial data analysis for their students. These positive results included students moving to the next proficiency level and students exiting services, providing evidence that by using the research proven framework, SIOP, teachers had positive student outcomes in schools.

Different Strategies from Previous Year or Semester Making an Impact

The teachers felt that a variety of instructional strategies they used during the school year contributed to the students' successes. Their responses were categorized: systematic approach to writing, schoolwide approaches and strategies, and the use of rubrics to guide the writing process. Each of these will be explored.

Systematic Approach to Teaching Writing

Because all of the schools experienced overall gains in the area of Writing, I wanted to see if they thought they did anything differently from the previous year or first semester thought made a positive impact on student outcomes. I posed the following question, "What did you do differently this year compared to last year or for the case of our first year teacher, what did you do differently second semester than first semester?"

Troy immediately answered, "Drilled!"

Samantha promptly stated, “He not only drilled.” She looked at Troy and continued, “If I may speak for you because I know what you did.”

Troy answered with a chuckle, “Please, because I don’t actually know.”

As an aside, during an individual interview Troy, a first year teacher, talked about how Samantha was a great source of professional development for him because she had been teaching ESL longer than he had and had worked at the school for years. Watching the two of them interact was entertaining because there was chemistry between them. The next exchange is an attempt to illustrate it and how Samantha’s response for him is a type of professional development for Troy because she is sharing with him what she has observed.

Samantha continued, “Sometimes it is hard to know [what you did] when you are a teacher and you are in it. He really did a great job of showing examples and breaking it down. Like when he was doing constructed response questions, he would say ‘Ok, this is the question, that is the prompt. This is how we take the prompt and turn it in to the answer.’”

Troy added to Samantha’s description. He told students “I do not care what your answer is, how would you start it? If the question is ‘what is the theme? What are the first few words of your answer? I do not care what the theme is; you are going to start with ‘The theme is . . .’” Samantha added, “And then he would break it down into a type of equation. ‘First you have your thesis statement . . .’”

Troy interjected, “I give them a formula. . . . A systematic approach that provides a framework . . . No matter the topic you can use this formula every time.” Both

Samantha and Troy continued explaining the framework each adding to what the other said. In many ways, I think Troy is one of the change agents for the school. This was his first year at the school along with a new principal who supported the sheltered classes and supported the schedules.

School-wide Approaches and Strategies

Sally said a difference at her school was that every teacher in the school focused on a single approach. They promoted note-taking to help all students with constructed responses which is a new requirement with Common Core. Students had to find information within selections so that they could provide a detailed response. Sally described that “for the ESL students, they often know that they have the information, but they just cannot put it down.” Because the entire school used the same strategy, ELL received consistent support in all classes to help develop skills that organized their thoughts so that the ideas and thoughts could be captured on paper.

Troy quickly added that at the high school level they did something similar. Students wrote the keywords from the prompt on all of the pages of passages to give the students a visual reminder of the purpose of reading a particular selection. It provided visual cues for the students as they read the selection and provided a focus for them as they organized their thoughts as reading. The strategies were used with many teachers; again the collaboration among teachers contributed to the students’ successes.

Using Rubrics

Audrey spoke about how she provided a rubric to students so that they knew what she asked them do. “Rubrics are checklists, guides, roadmaps to help with writing.” She

also taught the students how to make their own rubrics for other class assignments to help them organize the assignment making sure they knew what the teacher was asking them to do. She provided support as the ELL created their rubrics. She allotted time for students to review their own work using the rubric to ensure they addressed all of the required components. She asked students “Do you have all of the puzzle pieces?” Again, it provided a systematic way for students to organize and review their writing allowing for edits and modifications, if needed.

These ESL teachers were continuously using different strategies to assist students organizing thoughts and ideas so they are able to record their ideas. In all cases, the efforts of the school also supported the ELL because students received consistent messages, support, and strategies in their content or grade level classes.

Professional Development Impacting Student Growth

After hearing the teachers talk about what they did differently between school years or semesters, I asked “How did you know to do what you just described since you all named at least one new strategy you used in 2012–13?”

Audrey immediately answered “Professional Development . . . because the most recent session I took had us look at the process [students follow] rather than solely the product [at the end].” This professional development shifted Audrey’s focus to *how* students complete assignments. A rubric provided the students a guide to help them and also for her monitoring students’ work to see where a student might need additional support and “to figure out the breakdown” in understanding. Her response was aligned with the SIOP component that addresses review and assessment.

Sally responded “I think it is a little bit of everything. But for me, it is professional development. The way in which teaching is being approached at my school is so different because of Common Core.” It is the school’s commitment to schoolwide approaches and strategies that contributed to the student growth.

Once again, Troy and Samantha completed each other’s sentences and cited collaboration with the content teachers and consistency among teachers to impact student outcomes. Troy recalled his own experiences and used them to guide his practice. One of his high school teachers told him that most writing is going to follow a formula and as you previously read, that is how Troy teaches his students.

Based on the teachers’ responses throughout the study, I believe the teachers have internalized the SIOP framework. Their descriptions of their classroom practices and how they developed their lessons are clearly aligned to the SIOP components; yet they do not use the framework’s names for the categories. Rather, their lesson design, lesson delivery, and student growth confirm they have internalized the SIOP framework. SIOP was the focus of much professional development in past year. Teachers explored the SIOP eight components and received support from SIOP coaches. Professional development changed and was differentiated so teachers choose their professional development topics based on their needs. Much of professional development continued to be presented following the SIOP framework so that the facilitators of the sessions are modeling the strategies so that the strategies are translated to practice in classrooms.

What's Next for Writing in 2013–14?

In this final session, teachers talked about what they plan to in 2013-14 to continue helping students meet language and content objectives. All said they are going to continue enhancing what they are currently doing because they know that the instructional strategies they are using are effective both academically and with content. Samantha and Troy shared their plans for using a course final exam as a pre-test with students so that they can focus on areas that students do not know rather than teaching what they already know. They also felt that since the ACCESS data is months old when they start the school year, they want to administer the Lexile so that they have a better idea of each student's reading levels, current information, and they can modify instruction to meet students' needs.

The Lexile framework assesses students' reading abilities and the difficulty of text in various selections (NC DPI, n.d.). In North Carolina, students in grades 3-8 and students in English I receive a Lexile measure on the annual state assessment. A Lexile scale provides teachers and parents with information that allows them to monitor progress over time and provides teachers with data that allows them to personalize instruction based on the student's reading abilities.

The teachers explained their strategic ideas for the upcoming year to continue the facilitating their students' learning and language acquisition. Through their reflection they know what strategies were effective for their students and they are going to continue with those. Yet they have already identified some new strategies because it will enhance what they are currently doing.

The Group's Final Thoughts

The group also agreed that getting together once a month for their professional development would be beneficial because it would give them time to collaborate with one another about students' needs, identify appropriate strategies to use to address challenges, and possibly develop writing rubrics to help students continue improving their writing skills. They also talked about including another elementary school whose students eventually attend the middle and high school to include all schools in the feeder pattern. While planning this study, I indicated that a benefit of the study would be that teachers would have opportunities to reflect on their experiences, to share personal stories regarding their experiences as ESL teachers, and to participate in a form of professional development with each other. Through this study, it seems that they realized the benefits as well, and plan to meet in the upcoming school year.

Summary

During our final session, the teachers were able to celebrate their successes as they reviewed their students' ACCESS data. In typical teacher fashion, the celebration was short lived. The teachers began reflecting on the data and the discussion turned to what they thought about doing differently so that more growth was obtained, more students exited the program, and more content was learned. In those discussions, they talked about what instructional strategies they used and which ones they felt were more influential, but more of the conversation was about how they could do things a little differently.

Our focus was on continuous improvement. Improvement of them, not the students. They discussed what they needed to do differently so that the students would succeed even more. So many times, because of frustration with lack of improvement or growth, teachers will want to blame the students or the parents or the system or the law. Not these teachers; they focused on what the students need from them as teachers and committed themselves to keep trying and to keep supporting them.

They admit that professional development greatly impacts their practice. Because it is differentiated they can choose and attend sessions in areas that they need to be better teachers. They appreciate that the ESL Department does not believe that “one size fits all” and the ESL teachers have different needs.

After hearing the teachers’ initial analysis of their students’ performance, I understand why they were happy, jovial, and relieved when I met them in the lobby of Content High School on that sunny June day for our final meeting.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Research Questions Answered

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of professional practice when a systematic approach to the professional development of ESL teachers in the area of writing is utilized. I posed four specific research questions for this study which allowed me to explore the teachers' perceptions of their experiences. Chapters IV and V contain the teachers' opinions through their own voices. The following is a summary of my interpretations of what they shared.

The teachers' responses and perspectives during data collection confirmed the conceptual framework (see Figure 1) earlier presented. Teachers described the components of professional development that they believe are effective in relation to their enhanced teaching practice which positively impacted student academic and language acquisition outcomes. The core features and structural components of professional development are aligned to research (Birman et al., 2000; Desimone, 2009). With professional development offered by the ESL department aligned to the research-effective design, teachers benefit from professional development that is relevant, provides opportunities for networking and exploration, and time to practice implementing new strategies, and reflecting on their practice.

In professional development sessions, strategies are presented in relation to the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (SIOP) instructional framework. The research proven framework provides teachers with a structure to design and deliver lessons that most appropriately and effectively teaches students academic concepts and language. Therefore, when teachers take the information learned in professional development and use it within their classrooms, it is already embedded within the SIOP framework. Teachers described a variety of strategies they used to teach and support writing with their students. Each of them credited professional development to learning about new strategies or enhancing strategies they already used. From the teachers' point-of-view, they believe that a benefit of professional development was changing their practices in the classroom to impact student learning. This confirms the idea that these teachers have internalized SIOP and their lesson development and delivery positive impacts students writing outcomes.

Teachers chose appropriate and a wide variety of instructional strategies that (a) built students' background knowledge as it is foundational for learning, (b) introduced and modeled approaches that students can use to organize information that they read, and (c) offered multiple opportunities for students to apply and practice the skills and use the content they learned while providing feedback for continued progress. Just as the teachers stated multiple times through the study, there is no "magic bullet" for teaching Writing. However, when teachers used strategies that were based in research and determined effective, their students typically experienced positive growth in both language and content. Furthermore, Writing cannot be taught in isolation because it is a

component of Literacy. Through repetition, systemic approaches to writing, schoolwide use of instructional strategies, and writing in each content area, students gain the skills and knowledge to be able to write as a way to communicate their content understanding.

These ESL teachers participated in many professional development opportunities throughout their careers. During the 2012–13 school year, they participated in professional development offered by their individual schools, other district departments, and the ESL Department. The combination of these professional development events provided teachers with unique opportunities to expand their knowledge and increase their skills to teach and support ELL. Although one cannot determine the impact of just one source of professional development, the changes in the ESL Department's professional development design over the past three years provided teachers with focused support in both content and language areas to enhance their teaching practice. Furthermore, the quality professional development offered by the ESL Department is aligned to research proven components of effective professional development.

There was improvement in instruction based on the teachers' statements and descriptions of their experiences and confirmed by their initial review of the data. Such improvements were influenced by the professional development in which the teachers participated. Data from previous years, presented in Chapter III, validate the teachers efforts in the area of Writing based on the overall positive growth of ELL. This systematic approach to differentiated professional development improved the ESL teachers' teaching, thereby expanding their pedagogical repertoire rather than simply their teachers' toolbox.

The teachers used SIOP, a research proven effective framework, for lesson plan development and delivery and participated in appropriate professional development that contributed to positive students' results on ACCESS. Teaching for these ESL teachers is naturally integrated into their practice, and they have internalized the SIOP framework. Throughout the interviews, as these teachers recounted how they planned lessons and taught content and language, they were incorporating all of the SIOP components with a wide variety of strategies within the proven effective components.

Based on the teachers' perceptions, the professional development from the ESL Department met their needs. They felt their input was valued and the offerings were relevant to their practice. The ESL department provided coaches that provided feedback ensuring teachers were delivering lessons that provided students the best learning environment and lessons to meet content and language objectives. All of what the teachers relayed and expanded upon in the interview regarding their professional development experiences, how what was learned in the sessions was used as part of lesson design and delivery, and the impact they felt the instructional strategies had on student assessment data, is linked to the research-proven strategies. I offer that the district's systemic approach to differentiated professional development for ESL teachers that is rooted in research effective strategies and is created based on teacher and student data contributed to the annual positive growth of the ELL in the area of Writing.

Implications for Practice

This study offers feedback to those who design professional development for ESL teachers. Teachers appreciated opportunities to network with colleagues to discuss,

share, and practice what was learned. Then after implementing the new strategies, reflection on implementation and returning to meet with colleagues to discuss the lesson was important to meaningful professional development. Networking with colleagues may not occur in person; in fact many of the teachers described using technology to connect with colleagues. It is likely that teachers would get feedback and support more quickly than waiting until their next professional development session in person. The opportunity for prompt feedback was appreciated because modifications can be made more quickly.

Additionally, all of the teachers desired additional professional development in the area of understanding student data and linking it to instruction so that students' needs are better met. Unfortunately, the state required assessment is administered each February/March and results are returned in June just as school is ending. They identified many desired outcomes. They want to:

- learn how to use the ACCESS data, along with data already available, to gain a better understanding of their students' language proficiency
- confidently speak about their data to their content and grade level colleagues who also work with ELL as well as their principals
- make informed instructional decisions for their students based on individual student data.

The ESL teachers' desire for such professional development is not limited to them. Most teachers need additional support and opportunities to learn about how the data should direct teachers' next steps in designing and implementing lessons to ensure students'

needs are met. Lastly, the ESL teachers were unwavering that a data professional development incorporated opportunities to talk and ask questions, practice what they learn, planned time to reflect on what was implemented, and to receive feedback.

A differentiated, systemic approach for professional development has benefits that can be used as a framework for other departments and districts when planned based on teachers' areas of development and student data. The ESL Department's professional development design and offerings impacted how the ESL teachers planned and delivered lessons to positively impact ELL acquisition of English.

Further Research

Since ELL continue to attend public schools, and they are learning not only the content as are their English speaking peers but also English, there are many aspects of ELL learning that can be investigated further. As described in this study by the ESL teachers, many strategies or interventions are used within lessons to develop student writing skills so that they progress with language acquisition. Some might be more effective than others, so research that determines the effectiveness of strategies would inform teachers' practice. More specifically, what strategies are effective for all students no matter their language proficiency level? At Content High School ELL had Sheltered classes where there is more collaboration with content teachers. The teachers felt that this instructional design was instrumental to the success of the students. If this strategy was effective in high school, is it effective in middle schools as well? At the higher language proficiency levels, growth is slower and sometimes negative. What strategies or interventions should be used with students at the different proficiency levels so there is

always continued positive growth within the proficiency levels? This type of research will explore the instructional strategies since this study explored professional development for ESL teachers.

As the teachers in this study spoke about, relationships with students are important for the language acquisition process. Further investigation into students' perceptions of their teachers, the learning environment, and instructional strategies would provide input to the field of educating ELL so that the learning process includes students are true partners, rather than it being something that is done to them.

Families influence students' achievement levels. Exploring how teachers, both ESL teachers and content/grade level teachers, engage parents would provide additional insight into the impact on student achievement. For some family members, English may be limited; researching how schools and teachers involve parents in learning English and content materials will provide insight from another dimension that impacts student learning.

The inclusion of content and grade level teachers in ESL professional development has been discussed and any research study on collaboration among ESL and content/grade level teachers and its impact on ELL content and language growth would be instructive.

Lastly, expanding the current research by including ESL teachers in additional feeder patterns throughout the county of study or across the state or nation so that the results of this study could be generalized is a possible topic for further research.

Limitations

All research studies have limitations, and my study is no different. I acknowledge that the limitations in this study were the sample size, only one feeder pattern of schools, and only ESL teachers even though grade level and content teachers teach ELL. Qualitative studies frequently have small samples that are purposefully selected (Patton, 1996). The schools in the study were intentionally selected and this selection provided five teachers for the study. The purpose of the study was to gain teachers' perspectives on professional development specific to writing and how such training impacted lesson development and delivery. Although teachers from another feeder pattern may have different perspectives regarding lesson development and delivery, this study relays the story of these five teachers from one feeder pattern.

Finally, only ESL teachers were included in the study. During the study, all teachers acknowledged how they are only one part of their students' educational day. Content and grade level teachers have an impact on ELL performance. Even though the sample size was small there are important characteristics of professional development, lesson planning, and lesson delivery that were revealed by these teachers, all of which positively impacted student learning.

Scaling-up and Enhancing the Professional Development Design

I believe that if other departments take this systematic approach to professional development to create a plan to address teachers' needs based on student data, positive outcomes for both teachers' capacity and students' outcomes will occur. Scaling-up to a systemic approach to professional development that is based in research offers

comprehensive opportunities for professional development. Based on this study, I offer the following as key professional development components for teachers to enhance their professional practice and to positively impact student outcomes.

- Writing cannot be taught in isolation; rather it must be connected to other components of literacy and for ELL other components of language acquisition (Speaking, Listening, and Reading) and content. Within other programs, those who designed professional development to examine connections to their content so that the content included in the professional development is not presented in isolation.
- When a research-effective framework is used within a discipline, such as SIOP for ESL teachers, including the framework in the design of the professional development assists teachers with connecting their professional development learning to the framework's components and provides greater opportunity for teachers to translate what is learned in the professional development as part of the teacher's practice. Teachers can internalize the framework and it is simply the way in which they design and deliver lessons to students as the participants did in this study.
- Professional development opportunities that are designed and rooted in research provide greater opportunities for success. Core features and structural components of professional development complement one another and work together to enhance the professional development offering. The increases the effectiveness of the professional development offerings. The

more individualized, focused on a specific topic, and includes practice and reflection, the more effective the professional development is going to be for intended results for teachers and students.

Researcher's Final Thoughts

Some people continue searching for the fountain of youth or for the quick fix for weight loss. I did not necessarily start this research study thinking I was going to find the “magic bullet” for teaching Writing to ELL. But deep down, I was hoping that we would uncover a breakthrough strategy or intervention since we have experienced positive growth with our ELL in Writing. Instead, what I found was a group of highly dedicated teachers committed to teaching ELL English and content; reflecting on their practice; collaborating with others; trying new strategies until students gain the skills and knowledge they need to be successful, and making decisions with their students in mind. They create positive relationships with students and build inviting classroom environments where they and their students are free to make mistakes and learn. These same teachers are continuous learners who want to learn new strategies to enhance their practice, and they believe in their students.

There is no “magic bullet” or a “quick fix” for students to become proficient in Writing and ultimately English. Rather steady, consistent, growth gets students to obtain language proficiency. This study's findings offered validation for the systematic professional development model used by the ESL Department. As I analyzed the data gathered from the interviews, group sessions, and assessment data, everything aligned to what research suggests. Part of the analysis process is to determine if there are gaps in

the study or research. As I continued in this process, I was able to link research to each of the identified themes. The instructional strategies were aligned with the SIOP framework. The professional development design was aligned to research effective professional development form according to Birman et al. (2000) and Desimone (2009). Professional development was not a single opportunity; rather, sessions were offered over a course of at least a semester and included follow-up and coaching.

The instructional program followed the research effective SIOP framework (Echevarria et al., 2006) and it is implemented with fidelity. Teachers use a wide variety of instructional strategies providing students opportunities to learn and to use activities to demonstrate their learning of both language and content standards.

I looked for gaps and did not find any. Therefore, this study was one that provided validation for the current professional development design and also provided the teachers and researcher to explore the area of Writing to make some conclusions as to why students are experiencing positive growth in the area of Writing which is one of the last for ELL to develop. The teacher said numerous times, it is not just one thing that we do to help with writing. It is a combination of many strategies, and it is about continually trying different strategies until students experience success.

The research met my goals of expanding my knowledge of English Language Learners and ESL teachers. I was able to get out of the office and talk to the teachers who work with the students each day. They made the data that I had reviewed and been told about come alive. The teachers challenged my thinking and I participated in reflective practice just as they did. This qualitative research project consumed my

thoughts; I continuously asked myself questions about something I read or heard. Even though my questions never stopped, during my analysis I reached saturation when I did not identify additional themes. What I was able to identify were ideas for professional development sessions based on the teachers' ideas, as well as countless additional questions that usually started with "I wonder why . . ." or "I wonder how . . ." that could lead to other research studies.

Based on the teachers' comments in our last meeting, I believe that the experience of being part of the research study was rewarding for them. It was rewarding for me. I studied a topic that was out of my comfort zone and came to literally the last chapter of this story expanding my knowledge of English Language Learners and the teachers that teach them.

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APPENDIX A

SUBGROUP DATA FOR LEARNING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (LES), LANGUAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL (LMS), AND CONTENT HIGH SCHOOL (CHS)

Reading (3rd–5th grades): Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level

Subgroups	2009–10			2010–11			2011–12		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
White	70.70	84.90	81.70	61.40	84.90	81.90	74.20	85.00	82.20
Black	55.00	53.60	52.80	59.00	55.40	54.20	53.80	55.20	55.30
Hispanic	56.40	56.20	54.70	59.70	58.40	57.70	52.00	57.70	58.50
American Indian	N/A	66.90	57.40	N/A	61.60	59.10	N/A	60.40	59.90
Asian/ (Pacific Islander)	N/A	67.00	78.50	N/A	67.30	79.20	N/A	67.00	80.00
Pacific Islander*	---	---	---	N/A	63.80	67.10	N/A	46.20	68.40
Multi-Racial	42.90	69.50	72.40	80.00	72.20	73.50	62.50	70.90	73.90
E.D.	52.70	53.00	57.00	53.80	54.90	58.20	51.30	54.90	59.10
L.E.P.	40.60	34.70	36.80	41.20	36.60	37.40	34.30	33.60	34.80
S.W.D.	20.50	41.00	40.60	16.70	40.40	40.80	14.90	38.80	40.70

E.D. – Economically Disadvantaged Students

L.E.P. - Limited English Proficient Students

S.W.D. – Students with Disabilities

* For the 2010–11 school year, the subgroup of Asian/Pacific Island was divided into separate subgroups.

Math (3rd–5th grades): Percentage of Students At or Above Grade Level

Subgroups	2009–10			2010–11			2011–12		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
White	76.80	91.80	89.40	77.10	91.90	89.60	85.50	92.20	89.70
Black	76.30	71.70	67.90	80.00	72.50	69.00	73.10	72.60	70.00
Hispanic	83.60	79.10	76.90	75.00	79.50	78.50	74.70	80.20	79.30
American Indian	N/A	82.30	73.90	N/A	76.30	76.30	N/A	76.00	76.20
Asian/ (Pacific Islander)	N/A	84.90	91.30	N/A	84.70	91.80	N/A	84.40	92.10
Pacific Islander	---	---	---	N/A	80.90	80.60	N/A	84.60	80.30
Multi-Racial	71.40	83.90	82.60	>95	85.60	83.70	87.50	84.40	84.00
E.D.	76.30	72.80	73.20	76.30	73.50	74.20	71.50	73.90	75.00
L.E.P.	78.10	67.70	68.10	61.80	67.70	68.70	60.00	67.60	67.30
S.W.D.	41.00	59.80	57.00	56.30	59.50	57.60	55.30	58.70	57.30

Reading (6th–8th): Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level

Subgroups	2009–10			2010–11			2011–12		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
White	70.20	84.90	81.70	67.40	84.90	81.90	67.80	85.00	82.20
Black	49.50	53.60	52.80	53.70	55.40	54.20	54.10	55.20	55.30
Hispanic	42.90	56.20	54.70	39.70	58.40	57.70	44.90	57.70	58.50
American Indian	62.50	66.90	57.40	57.10	61.60	59.10	25.00	60.40	59.90
Asian/ (Pacific Islander)*	34.70	67.00	78.50	47.20	67.30	79.20	34.00	67.00	80.00
Pacific Islander	---	---	---	46.70	63.80	67.10	50.00	46.20	68.40
Multi-Racial	54.00	69.50	72.40	58.70	72.20	73.50	65.60	70.90	73.90
E.D.	45.30	53.00	57.00	47.40	54.90	58.20	49.50	54.90	59.10
L.E.P.	16.00	34.70	36.80	16.50	36.60	37.40	15.80	33.60	34.80
S.W.D.	25.60	41.00	40.60	25.90	40.40	40.80	25.40	38.80	40.70

E.D. – Economically Disadvantaged Students

L.E.P. - Limited English Proficient Students

S.W.D. – Students with Disabilities

* For the 2010–11 school year, the subgroup of Asian/Pacific Island was divided into separate subgroups

Math (6th–8th): Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level

Subgroups	2009–10			2010–11			2011–12		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
White	74.80	91.80	89.40	79.90	91.90	89.60	80.10	92.20	89.70
Black	58.40	71.70	67.90	65.20	72.50	69.00	68.20	72.60	70.00
Hispanic	57.60	79.10	76.90	56.90	79.50	78.50	63.80	80.20	79.30
American Indian	85.70	82.30	73.90	57.10	76.30	76.30	50.00	76.00	76.20
Asian/ (Pacific Islander)	57.10	84.90	91.30	66.70	84.70	91.80	58.00	84.40	92.10
Pacific Islander	---	---	---	66.70	80.90	80.60	83.30	84.60	80.30
Multi-Racial	66.00	83.90	82.60	82.60	85.60	83.70	87.50	84.40	84.00
E.D.	56.60	72.80	73.20	62.40	73.50	74.20	65.60	73.90	75.00
L.E.P.	34.30	67.70	68.10	39.20	67.70	68.70	45.60	67.60	67.30
S.W.D.	39.00	59.80	57.00	46.90	59.50	57.60	46.20	58.70	57.30

E.D. – Economically Disadvantaged Students

L.E.P. - Limited English Proficient Students

S.W.D. – Students with Disabilities

* For the 2010–11 school year, the subgroup of Asian/Pacific Island was divided into separate subgroups.

**High School: Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level
on State Assessment and Number of Assessments Administered**

Subject	2009–10				2010–11				2011–12			
	Sch	#	Dist	St	Sch	#	Dist	St	Sch	#	Dist	St
English I	60.50	349	77.70	82.40	65.90	328	79.30	80.60	66.30	335	80.80	82.90
Algebra I	37.10	251	70.90	77.80	37.90	319	72.60	76.70	47.50	314	78.20	78.70
Algebra II	58.70	208	73.30	84.90	49.90	363	72.40	82.30	---	---	---	---
Geometry	54.40	241	73.50	82.30	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Biology	68.40	348	77.10	81.20	68.40	374	75.80	79.90	57.60	354	80.10	83.00
Physical Science	---	---	---	---	27.60	98	59.30	76.50	---	---	---	---
Physics	45.30	64	59.30	76.40	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Civics & Economics	---	---	---	---	69.60	425	77.50	80.00	---	---	---	---
US History	64.20	358	71.80	78.70	73.60	292	80.20	81.50	---	---	---	---

High School: Percentage of Students at or Above Grade Level by Subgroup

Subgroups	2009–10			2010–11			2011–12		
	School	District	State	School	District	State	School	District	State
White	70.50	88.40	88.50	68.60	88.60	87.70	67.50	91.30	89.00
Black	54.50	62.10	67.00	54.30	63.20	66.00	53.10	69.60	68.60
Hispanic	60.90	69.20	74.10	55.30	69.30	74.00	51.30	76.80	75.10
American Indian	66.70	76.50	71.70	53.30	72.30	71.30	77.80	78.00	75.90
Asian/ (Pacific Islander)*	52.60	77.40	88.00	62.10	77.20	86.60	47.80	79.80	87.30
Pacific Islander	---	---	---	81.80	90.80	82.60	64.30	80.00	82.50
Multi-Racial	61.80	76.50	83.30	57.10	78.10	82.40	62.20	83.90	84.80
E.D.	51.80	62.20	70.90	52.70	63.20	69.40	50.60	69.30	71.80
L.E.P.	38.50	51.10	55.80	34.20	45.00	48.70	24.30	49.20	49.90
S.W.D.	36.40	46.40	54.90	31.70	42.10	45.00	27.00	40.00	41.50

E.D. – Economically Disadvantaged Students

L.E.P. - Limited English Proficient Students

S.W.D. – Students with Disabilities

* For the 2010–11 school year, the subgroup of Asian/Pacific Island was divided into separate subgroups.

APPENDIX B

ONLINE SURVEY

On-line Survey Administered to participants prior to individual, semi structured interviews to gain background knowledge.

1. Study Name—To maintain confidentiality throughout the research study, please select a pseudonym that will be used in this survey and the individual interviews:
2. Counting this school year as a year, how many total years have you taught ESL?
3. How many years have you been teaching ESL in Guilford County Schools?
4. How many years have you been teaching ESL at your current school?
5. If you taught in a country other the U.S.? If so, where else and for how long?
6. If you have other teaching certificates/licenses, what are they?
7. What professional development did you participate in during the past two school years (2010–11 and 2011–12)?
8. What professional development did you take during first semester of 2012?
9. What professional development are you taking for the second semester?
10. What, if any, change, have you experienced in the professional development offerings?
11. Have you participated in any professional development specific to the ACCESS Writing section? If so, what was the professional development?

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL

IRB< irbcorre@uncg.edu>

Tue, Feb 19, 2013 at 9:01 AM

To: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Cc: [REDACTED]@uncg.edu, [REDACTED]@uncg.edu

To: Carl Lashley
Ed Ldrship And Cultural Found
342 School of Education Building

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 2/19/2013

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption

Exemption Category: This study continues to meet the following exempt category: 2.Survey, interview, public observation

Study #: 13-0020

Study Title: The Effects on Professional Practice of a Systematic Approach to the Professional Development of ESL Teachers in the Area of Writing

This submission has been reviewed by the above IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to highlight how professional development for ESL teachers translates into practice for identified, accomplished teachers and impacts students' writing skills so that English learners meet the criteria.

Regulatory and other findings:

- If your study is contingent upon approval from another site (such as school or school district), you will need to submit a modification at the time you receive that approval.

Study Specific Details:

The modification, dated 2/15/13, addresses the following:

- Addition of letter of support from Guilford County Schools

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

CC:

Kelly Hales

ORI, (ORI), Non-IRB Review Contact



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA
GREENSBORO

OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.1482
Web site: integrity.uncg.edu
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

To: Carl Lashley
Ed Ldrship and Cultural Found
342 School of Education Building

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 2/11/2013

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption

Exemption Category: 2.Survey, interview, public observation

Study #: 13-0020

Study Title: The Effects on Professional Practice of a Systematic Approach to the Professional Development of ESL Teachers in the Area of Writing

This submission has been reviewed by the above IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Study Description:

The purpose of this study is to highlight how professional development for ESL teachers translates into practice for identified, accomplished teachers and impacts students' writing skills so that English learners meet the criteria.

Regulatory and other findings:

- If your study is contingent upon approval from another site (such as school or school district), you will need to submit a modification at the time you receive that approval.

Study Specific Details:

- Your study is approved and is in compliance with federal regulations and UNCG IRB Policies. Please note that you will also need to remain in compliance with the university Access To and Data Retention Policy which can be found at http://policy.uncg.edu/research_data/.

Investigator's Responsibilities

Please be aware that any changes to your protocol must be reviewed by the IRB prior to being implemented. The IRB will maintain records for this study for three years from the date of the original determination of exempt status.

CC:

Kelly Hales

ORC, (ORI), Non-IRB Review Contact

Attachment C
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title: The Effects on Professional Practice of a Systematic Approach to the Professional Development of ESL Teachers in the Area of Writing

Project Director: Kelly Hales

Participant's Name: _____

What is the study about?

This study involves research as part of a doctoral dissertation that will highlight how professional development for ESL teachers translates into practice for six, accomplished elementary, middle, and high school teachers and impacts students' writing skills so that English Learners (EL) meet the exit criteria from English as a Second Language (ESL) services. Many EL are not exiting from English as a Second Language (ESL) services because writing requirements of the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) are not met. Students remain identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) until exit criteria of the ACCESS are met. Writing is the last domain to develop for EL and may take up to ten years.

Although the student researcher is a Guilford County Schools' administrator, the purpose of the study is solely for the researcher's role as a student and her research in the area of professional development and ESL teachers.

GCS is not sponsoring or conducting the research. It is part of the researcher's course of study at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Why are you asking me?

You are a teacher within the feeder pattern within the school district of study. Additionally, you have been identified as an accomplished teacher who has and continues participating in professional development within a professional learning community that focuses on integrating technology, specifically in the area of writing.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?

The study includes a survey, two individual interviews, attendance at scheduled professional development, and a final group discussion. The chart below outlines the sessions.

Data Collection Instrument	Timeline for Collection	Length (maximum minutes)
Survey Attachment A	February 2013	20
Individual Interview #1 Attachment B	February 2013	90
ESL Group Professional Development Session #1 Attachment B	February 2013	120
Individual Interview #2	March 2013	90
ESL Group Professional Development Session #2	April 2013	120
Final ESL Group Professional Development Session – Focus: Group Reflection Session with Test Data	May 2013	120

After each individual interview and observation, transcripts and summary notes will be shared for your review to ensure that your input is accurately recorded. No stress, pain, or other unpleasant reaction should be experienced as part of the study. If you have questions about this study, please contact the researcher, Kelly Hales, [REDACTED].

UNCG IRB
Approved Consent Form

Valid 2/11/13 to 2/10/16

Is there any audio/video recording?

The individual interviews and the ESL Group Professional Development sessions including the final session that will focus on group reflection will be recorded. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, your confidentiality for things you say on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described below. The recordings will be transcribed and the transcriptionist will sign a confidentiality form that will be kept on file. Additionally, the transcriptions will not contain your name or school; rather pseudonyms will be used.

What are the dangers to me?

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants.

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Kelly Hales who may be reached at (336) [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]@uncg.edu

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG toll-free at (855)251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?

This research project may provide educational administrators and teachers with strategies deemed effective for professional development offerings in the area of writing for K-12 ESL teachers. Ultimately, students may be positively impacted as a result of teachers' participation in professional development offerings within the school system that are designed with the identified strategies resulting from this study.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?

There are no direct benefits to participants in this study. However, participants will have an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in participating in professional development and then developing and delivering lessons focusing on writing for students. Sharing personal stories regarding your experiences as an ESL teachers is personally rewarding in itself. The research outcomes and conclusions will be made available to individuals for review and consideration.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study

How will you keep my information confidential?

Information gathered from this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet, electronic information will be saved on a password protection computer, and not identifying participants by name when data are disseminated. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

For Internet Research, include this wording:

Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.

What if I want to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the

UNCG IRB
Approved Consent Form

Valid 2/11/13 to 2/10/16

contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, or have the individual specified above as a participant participate, in this study described to you by Kelly Hales.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNCG IRB
Approved Consent Form

Valid 2/11/13 to 2/10/16

APPROVED IRB

Attachment E

FEB 11 2013

Good morning/afternoon. As you know, I am pursuing my Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I have completed all of my coursework and am now working on my dissertation. In this role, I am a student researcher.

This study involves research as part of a doctoral dissertation that will highlight how professional development for ESL teachers translates into practice for six, accomplished elementary, middle, and high school teachers and impacts students' writing skills so that English Learners (EL) meet the exit criteria from English as a Second Language (ESL) services. As you know, many EL are not exiting from English as a Second Language (ESL) services because writing requirements of the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) are not met. Students remain identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) until exit criteria of the ACCESS are met. Writing is the last domain to develop for EL and may take up to ten years.

Since you are a teacher within the feeder pattern within the school district of study, you are one of six, GCS ESL teachers are eligible for participation and there are no exclusions. Additionally, you have been identified as an accomplished teacher who has and continues participating in professional development within a professional learning community that focuses on integrating technology, specifically in the area of writing.

The study includes a survey, two individual interviews, attendance at scheduled professional development, and a final group discussion. All of the sessions will be audio recorded. The following outlines the sessions.

Data Collection Instrument	Timeline for Collection	Length (maximum minutes)
Survey Attachment A	February 2013	20
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Individual Interview #2	March 2013	90
ESL Group Professional Development Session #2	April 2013	120
Final ESL Group Professional Development Session – Focus: Group Reflection Session with Test Data	May 2013	120

After each individual interview and observation, transcripts and summary notes will be shared for your review to ensure that your input is accurately recorded. No stress, pain, or other unpleasant reaction should be experienced as part of the study.

The location of the individual interviews will be determined by you to ensure his/her comfort. The group sessions will be at the already determined location set by the ESL Department at a GCS facility from 4 PM to 6 PM. As with all individual and group sessions, all efforts will be made to ensure that participants are not overheard by others. If the group decides they prefer another location, accommodations will be made.

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

I can be contacted at any time at either [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]@uncg.edu.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide—The questions below provided the structured for the open ended interviews with teachers and the open ended conversations among teachers during group sessions. The data collected will provide information to answer the following research questions:

1. What strategies do ESL teachers use to support English Language Learners' (ELL) progress in Writing?
2. How does professional development for ESL teachers affect lesson delivery in Writing for ELL?
3. What impact does professional development have on ESL teachers' lesson development and lesson delivery in the area of Writing?
4. What are ESL teachers' perceptions of professional development offerings specific to Writing?

Guiding Questions

1. What do you remember about your professional development experiences offered by the ESL department?
 - a. The ESL department offers professional development for ESL teachers throughout the school year. What professional development have you participated in during the past two school years?
 - b. What professional development specific to Writing have you participated in during the past two school years?

- c. What have been the best components of the professional development and why?
 - d. What part of the professional development need some improvement and why?
2. How has the professional development influenced the way you plan and teach Writing up until now?
- a. After attending professional development about Writing, how did your lesson planning and delivery change?
 - b. Would you consider the professional development offerings effective? If so, what made it effective and how do you know it was effective?
 - c. Writing is one of the components of the ACCESS – what instructional strategies do you use in your instruction to assist your students in the development of Writing? How do you know that the instructional strategies are effective?
3. If you could design the next professional development session for Writing, what would it be like? What areas of Writing need to be addressed in more detail?
- a. How many times would the sessions be offered?
 - b. Who would offer the professional development?
 - c. What additional support outside of the sessions will be offered?
 - d. How is the professional development determined to be effective?
 - e. Who needs to participate in the professional development?

- f. What data will be used in the design of the professional development and also to monitor the effect on lesson development and delivery?

APPENDIX E

EVIDENCE OF SIOP COMPONENTS

Evidence of SIOP Component: Lesson Preparation

SIOP Component Lesson Preparation	Evidence
By preparing lessons that incorporate language and content objectives, teachers are able to plan meaningful activities, secure supplemental materials, and adapt content to appropriately teach the content concepts.	“I can . . .” statements Co-Teaching

Evidence of SIOP Component: Building Background

SIOP Component Building Background	Evidence
For ELL, new information must be connected to students’ backgrounds and existing experiences. Therefore the language must be meaningful for the students as students develop academic language.	Reading selections—fiction and non-fiction, short stories, novels, poetry Discussions

Evidence of SIOP Component: Comprehensible Input

SIOP Component Comprehensible Input	Evidence
Making content understandable is important for ELL. Teachers are intentional in their verbal communication so that students’ linguistic needs are met and present content using a variety of techniques.	Teacher modeling Reverse modeling—write as if the teacher Technology Interactive writing Guided Reading/high interest selections Repetition of concept with a variety of strategies

Evidence of SIOP Component: Strategies

SIOP Component Strategies	Evidence
<p>To help people comprehend, learn, and retain new information, people use mental processes and plans. Teachers adapt and monitor strategies while teaching reading and writing, and strategies are divided into categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective.</p>	<p>Cognitive – Helps students organize information Anchor charts Chunking information Foldables Graphic organizers Post it Notes on pages with notes PowerPoint with anticipation guide Timelines and sequencing Vocabulary strategies Vocabulary boxes</p> <p>Metacognitive – Process to monitoring thinking and match with problem solving strategies, clarifying purpose for learning, monitoring person understanding, and making corrections of understanding if not achieved. Computer applications/programs Folder games Questioning to find answers</p> <p>Social/affective – Interaction among students to clarify information, to participate in group discussion, or engage in collaborative learning groups. Class presentations Examples and stems Group discussions Group/pair work Music, songs, rhymes</p>

Evidence of SIOP Component: Instruction

SIOP Component Interaction	Evidence
Providing students opportunities (both verbal and written) to practice academic language in all content areas in meaningful situations based	Blogging Center work that involves movement Discussions High engagement and collaborative activities such as Kagen and Marzano Journaling Various group configurations—whole group, partners, small groups

Evidence of SIOP Component: Practice/Application

SIOP Component Practice/ Application	Evidence
Students are provided multiple opportunities for hands-on practice with new materials with the security of a teacher monitoring students' learning.	Cloze activity Completing/changing the end of the story Constructive responses Gradual release Independent work Journaling/Blogging/Free write Letter writing Posters Timed writing

Evidence of SIOP Component: Lesson Delivery

SIOP Component Lesson Delivery	Evidence
The way in which the planned lesson is implemented. Appropriate support provided for how the content and language objectives are presented, the level of student engagement, and the pace of the lesson.	Think/Pair/Share Allocating enough time to front load or reinforce new information without overwhelming students.

Evidence of SIOP Component: Review and Assessment

SIOP Component Review and Assessment	Evidence
<p>Reviewing and assessing to determine how effective lesson delivery occurs is a continuous process that occurs prior to any instruction to determine students' strengths and needs and on-going during a lesson to check for progress towards the content and language objective.</p>	<p>Teacher feedback to students—in person during conference, and in writing Questions from the teacher to prompt additional thinking and processes to check for understanding. Peer feedback to students—peer review and editing Checking-in with students during a lesson by monitoring work and by asking questions. Computer editing (Word) Encouraging statements, physical contact, signs (high-five, smile) Multiple exposure to information Portable word walls Predicting activities/ questions Presenting to classmates Rubrics</p>